

# NAVY NEWS

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## LIFELINE TO LIBYA

**CIVILIANS  
SAVED – AND  
TARGETS  
HAMMERED**

## HELMAND HEROES

**PILOT'S-EYE  
VIEW OF  
AFGHANISTAN**

## WORKING CAPITAL

**BULWARK LAYS  
ON A SHOW  
FOR LONDON**



# SEA OF FIRE

A Sea Dart races from its launcher on HMS Liverpool as the destroyer takes down a target drone in preparation for her impending deployment. See page 3 for details.

Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Sutton, FRPU North







# Fleet Focus

JUST as the Naval Service starts to take up the lion's share of the effort in Afghanistan, along comes another flashpoint – and a demonstration of the Royal Navy's versatility and worth.

The situation in Libya is evolving rapidly, but after the humanitarian effort – the evacuation of civilians from Benghazi by **HM ships Cumberland** and **York**, later joined by **HMS Westminster** – came the strike against Gaddafi's ability to wage war on his people, with submarine **HMS Triumph** firing the first shots of the British contribution (see pages 23-25).

Meanwhile preparations for Herrick 14 in Helmand, led by **3 Commando Brigade RM** and including elements of the Jungle **Commando Helicopter Force**, continue to gather pace (see page 8).

The past weeks have seen some old warriors formally bow out of service.

Iconic aircraft carrier **HMS Ark Royal** and veteran Type 42 destroyer **HMS Manchester** decommissioned in Portsmouth within days of each other (see page 10), and the **Jetstreams** of **750 Naval Air Squadron**, used to train observers, also enjoyed one final day in the limelight before handing over duties to the King Airs (see page 17).

It wasn't quite the end of the road for Type 22 frigate **HMS Campbeltown**, due to decommission this month, but she made a final visit to the town with which she shares her name (see page 7).

If all this talk of farewells sounds depressing, there was still plenty of operational activity to follow as well.

**HMS Scott** continued to scan the seas around Antarctica, though it could be her last trip south (for now) as the ink dries on a contract to lease an interim replacement for **HMS Endurance**, a ship which will bear the name of a popular ice patrol ship from the '50s and '60s, **HMS Protector** (see pages 18-19).

The Navy's amphibious ships have been particularly active.

**HMS Albion** is gearing up to lead the Royal Navy's marquee deployment of 2011, Cougar, to the Mediterranean and beyond (see right) while her sister **HMS Bulwark** has been showing her versatility to all and sundry during a visit to London (see page 14). Helicopter carrier **HMS Ocean**, meanwhile, has embarked on a programme of aviation training with, er... helicopters, which will see Apaches, Chinooks and Merlins on her flight deck over the course of the spring (see page 10).

Sticking with the WAFUs, the Flying Tigers of **814 NAS** had a successful spell hunting submarines off Sicily in Exercise Proud Manta (see page 6) while the largest helicopter squadron in the world, **815 NAS**, is our Squadron of the Month (see page 12).

Minehunter **HMS Brocklesby** was also scanning the waters of the Med, proving the best at spotting mines in the Strait of Gibraltar on Exercise Noble Mariner (see page 6).

The Gulf still features heavily in ship's programmes; **HMS Iron Duke** has taken up station off the Iraqi oil platforms (see page 5), **HMS Cornwall** visited Dubai (see page 22) while minehunters **Pembroke**, **Middleton**, **Grimsby** and **Chiddingfold** continue to ply their trade out of Bahrain (see page 6).

**HMS Richmond** was banging the anti-piracy drum in the Seychelles, happily for her ship's company while others banged their drums for carnival (see page 4).

**HMS Liverpool** has been sailing colder seas, firing Sea Darts off Scotland before visiting her namesake city (see page 3).

Which just leaves us time to mention the Prince of Wales enjoying a drink in his local with his old crew from **HMS Bronington** (see page 16), miniature sailors (see page 17) and another tough **No Smoking Day** for Big Cig around the establishments (see page 35).



● Landing craft evacuate civilians from the Brownian enclave of 'Freeport' to HMS Albion

Picture: LA(Phot) Luron Wright, HMS Albion

## I'm a civvie – get me out of here!

SAILORS. Warships. International crisis. Evacuation of civilians.

If you're thinking 'HMS Cumberland' and 'Libya' you'd be wrong.

No, these are Britons caught up in the latest unrest between Ginger and Brownia.

Saving their bacon is the good ship Albion, which has dispatched her landing craft to 'Freeport' to evacuate them.

The Brownian enclave of Freeport is actually Wilsons Beach, just around the corner from Weston Mill Lake Jetty (hence the unmistakable outline of HMS Ocean in the background).

It was just one of four points around the Plymouth area selected for the mock evacuation as Albion's pre-deployment training reached its climax.

The nation's flagship has spent the opening weeks of 2011 enjoying 'top-up training' courtesy of the Flag Officer Sea Training

before she leads the RN's task force deployment – Cougar – of the year to the Med and beyond.

The climax of that training was a simulated NEO – non-combatant evacuation operation – from a conflict-ravaged foreign state... something long-practised by ships passing through FOST, but given additional relevance in the light of current events in North Africa.

In the latest dry run, helicopters and landing craft were despatched to Jupiter Point, Turnchapel, Wacker Quay (near Antony) and Treluggan boatyard (in Saltash) to round up the scattered civilians – somewhat to the bemusement of locals who woke to a lot of military activity on an otherwise ordinary March morning.

Once collected, the evacuees were taken to a central evacuation point on Wilsons Beach at Bull Point, where green berets from Alpha Coy 40 Cdo had been landed to provide security for landing craft

to ferry the civvies to Albion.

Aboard the assault ship the evacuees received food, accommodation and medical attention before onward passage once more, this time to RFA Mounts Bay so Albion could resume more warlike operations.

"Albion's unique capabilities – as a floating headquarters that can also land a military force at a time and place of our choosing – mean we are the perfect platform for a wide range of military or humanitarian operations," said her CO Capt James Morley.

With the FOSTies happy with Albion's performance, they declared the assault ship ready for operations of any sort, at any time, anywhere around the world.

There was also the chance to put in a bit of training while Albion was alongside.

Exercise Green Alligator – green for marine, alligator because it's HMS Al(bion) and it sounds

quite worry... – was staged in a planning room aboard the assault ship.

The staff of UK Task Group Commander Cdre John Kingwell joined the assault ship alongside in her home base of Devonport for a week-long staff exercise.

They were joined by elements of the HQ of 3 Commando Brigade, the Joint Helicopter Command, the Royal Netherlands Marines Corps and 539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines – some of whom are due to deploy with the ship this month.

For five days the staff acted as if Albion was at sea, sailing to react with an emerging crisis (not entirely unlike the real world presently), planning the Navy's response.

After a brief spot of maintenance in her home port of Devonport, she's due to leave the UK in company with HMS Sutherland *inter alia* as Cougar kicks off.







# Mersey beaters

## TARGET destroyed.

Are there any more satisfying words in a warfare officer's vocabulary? In this instance, it was more a case of target obliterated. Pulverised. Vaporised.

How do we know this?

Because HMS Liverpool spent some time over the last known position and found nothing left of the target drone not one but two Sea Darts knocked out of skies of the Outer Hebrides.

Seawolf firings on Type 23s are ten-a-penny. Sea Dart launches, however, are a rarer beast. As for a salvo launch, well...

Given Sea Dart's range (upwards of 80 miles) you need a lot of empty air space – hence the ranges off Benbecula in north-west Scotland.

Even with the remoteness of the island (pop. 1,249), you still need three aircraft to clear the range – one Dornier operated by defence research firm Qinetiq, one Sea King ASaC from 857 NAS and one Mk8 Lynx from the ship's own flight.

And then you need reasonable weather. In March. Off north-west Scotland.

The first day on the range was ruled out. Overcast. Misty. It proved impossible to clear the air and sea space.

But on day two, the gods were good, the skies clear.

The first target was a transponder towed on a wire by a sub-sonic Mirach remote-controlled drone, launched from Benbecula.

The Mirach features a rear-facing camera – which allowed the Liverpoolians to see confirmation of their 'hit' when the Sea Dart obliterated the transponder.

For the salvo launch (one Sea Dart leaves the launcher shortly after the first, rather than simultaneously) the ship received permission to down the drone itself.

As Sea Dart salvo firings are (a) impressive and (b) infrequent, the 42's bridge was chocker with gofers, including ship's photographers Std Debbie Murphy – who described the sight as "awesome" and felt a "massive shock" running through the

destroyer – and LS(EW) 'Smudge' Smith – who described the salvo as "very impressive – I'm really glad I got to see Sea Dart one last time before I leave the ship".

And from Lt Cdr Ally Pollard, Liverpool's Anti-Air Warfare Officer, in the ops room a succinct: "Target destroyed."

The reason for the triple launch? The destroyer sailed at the end of March on Cougar – the RN's flagship amphibious deployment to the Mediterranean – and will provide air cover for the task group, which includes HMS Albion and HMS Sutherland.

Before heading to the Outer Hebrides, the destroyer paid her first substantial visit to the Mersey in three years (it's possibly her last – although the ship hopes to squeeze in a final farewell before she pays off next year).

The ship was escorted up the Mersey by Liverpool's university boat, HMS Charger, packed with TV and press... who hopped across to the destroyer when she came alongside; the ITV Granada crew remained aboard when the rest had departed so presenter Jo Blythe (pictured bottom left) could provide the weather forecast from the forecandle.

In excess of 6,000 people came to see the Type 42 during her stay at the cruise liner berth in the shadow of the Liver Building; countless more witnessed the ship's company as they paraded through the city streets before attending a civic reception, where a poem written by Wtr Emma Graham was read out.

The occasion was, said CO Cdr Colin Williams, a "very proud day" as HMS Liverpool returned "to her spiritual home" and enjoyed "the warm hospitality which we always receive in the city".

"The feeling of coming home was fantastic," enthused clubz LPT Christopher Reeves. "I was really proud to be able to show the ship's company my home town – and to show my family HMS Liverpool. It was also one of the best runs ashore we've had."

Fellow Liverpoolian PO(WS) Neil Edge

organised a visit to Liverpool FC's training ground in Kirby to watch the Premiership players practise, a tour of Anfield, and tickets to the Europa League clash with FC Sparta Prague (won 1-0 by the home side).

The club also allowed the European Cup (as five-time winners, the Reds were permitted to keep the coveted trophy) to leave the trophy room and go on display in the ship's hangar... prompting a lot of ship's company to pose for photographs with it.

For those of the blue persuasion, tickets were also arranged for Everton's Premiership game with Sunderland (which the Toffees won 2-0).

AB Chris Evans and his wife LMA Katie Evans took the opportunity to christen their ten-month-old daughter Millie aboard (Mrs E hails from nearby Walton); in keeping with RN tradition, the ship's bell served as the christening font and, in due course, the youngster's name will be inscribed on the inside.

Another young addition to the Liverpool family is AB Colin Linaker. He joined the ship in Liverpool with his bags packed with everything he'll require for the impending deployment: ID card, passport, toiletries, change of clothes (even a bow tie for cocktail parties).

Nothing particular unusual in that. Except that Colin is a teddy bear.

Pupils at Linaker Primary School in Southport asked the ship to take the furry mascot with them on deployment – and keep them up to date with his progress.

So Colin is now in the safe hands of LS(CIS) Emma Adams and her shipmates in 2F Mess... and is the only male in the RN permitted to sleep in a female mess (in his own hammock, naturally).

To date the bear's been treated to winching into the ship's Lynx (and sitting in its cockpit), commanding Liverpool from the captain's chair on the bridge, and a spot of circuit training on the flight deck.

Never let it be said we don't bring you all the hard, worry news from the Fleet...



pictures: la(photos) ben sutton, chris mumby and al macleod, frpu north







## Giant to dominate Forth

WHAT a marvel of British engineering.

That's right, it's the Forth Rail Bridge... and inching under it is a gigantic crane which will be instrumental in building the Navy's next-generation aircraft carriers.

The Goliath crane will be used to move sections of HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales weighing up to 1,000 tonnes apiece at Rosyth dockyard.

The two carriers are being built in huge segments at half a dozen yards around the UK, with the 65,000-tonne finished articles being assembled one at a time at Babcock's yard in Rosyth.

The dry dock there has already been enlarged to accommodate the capital ships.

Over the next six months, the £12.3m crane will be erected and tested and is due to be ready for use by September.

Goliath should become a dominant feature on the banks of the Forth: its span is 120m (393ft) and it's 68m (223ft) to the underside of the main beam

(despite many media reports it's not the biggest crane in the UK, however – the pairing of Samson and Goliath at the Harland & Wolff yard in Belfast are larger).

The crane was built in Shanghai by Zhenhua Port Machinery over the past two years.

It took nearly three months to ship the structure 14,000 miles from the Far East to its home on the Forth, using a specialist transporter.

Goliath needed to pass under the Forth's iconic crossing at low tide – and made it with a handful of metres to spare.

"After watching the Goliath crane being fabricated, it was fantastic to see it coming under the Forth bridges," said Sean Donaldson, in charge of the carrier project at Babcock.

Goliath was delivered partially erected; it will be raised to its full height while still on the transport vessel before being winched ashore and on to the rails on which it will run.

Picture: PO(Phot) Nick Tryon, FRPU North



## They sell Seychelles

IT'S a hard life being Jack.

Sailors from HMS Richmond pose with an Indonesian dance troupe in the Seychelles as a carnival on the island paradise reaches its climax.

Despite the ship's company having a thoroughly good time, there was a serious message to the partying: pirates will not beat us.

Tourism is the largest single contributor to the Seychelles' economy and has been affected by what Richmond's Commanding Officer Capt Mike Walliker calls "the scourge of piracy".

His Type 23 frigate took a break from clamping down on piracy for a few days' break in the Seychelles.

Richmond's visit coincided with the inaugural *Carnival International de Victoria* (translation's fairly easy...) which saw more than 20 nations represented in some form.

In Blighty's case there was a steel band from Notting Hill and Richmond's ship's company.

The carnival was intended to bolster visitor numbers in the Seychelles and proved to be a display of vibrant colour and loud music. It went down well with locals and visitors who partied long into the night (the matelots, of course, grabbed an early night...).

The steel band were also invited aboard Richmond where they performed the National Anthem during a ceremonial sunset.

Also in harbour was the Indian warship INS Sukanya, whose sailors challenged Richmond to a game of Twenty20 cricket.

Played on an 'unusual' (good naval euphemism for 'awful') pitch under the blazing sun, the contest was won by the team which scored a lot more runs than the other (ie the Brits lost...).

The frigate's stop-off in the Seychelles was not all about partying and sport, of course. As well as giving the ship's company a break, it also meant they could share their experiences tackling piracy with the local coast guard.

While the warship was berthed in Port Victoria, several members of the ship's company climbed aboard Seychelles patrol craft to carry out maintenance on their

engines and weapons systems.

"The Seychelles is at the heart of the struggle to combat piracy in the Indian Ocean," explained Capt Walliker.

"Piracy's effect on both the tourist and fishing industry has been marked. The international carnival aimed to send a message worldwide that the Seychelles is a beautiful and safe tourist destination.

"My ship's company were overwhelmed by the hospitality shown us."

Before heading for the Seychelles, Richmond escorted an aid ship into Somalia, delivering food for several thousand men, women and children.

The MV Fadhil Rabi was making her latest run into the troubled East African state, carrying sustenance to the Somali capital Mogadishu under the UN's World Food Programme.

The St Vincent-registered merchant ship is a regular on the run, but with vessels in the past being hijacked – irrespective of the cargo they carry – the European Union Naval Force has provided escort.

Richmond is the latest addition to the Spanish-led force. Having spent the first few weeks of her time with the EU task group on counter-piracy patrols off the northern and eastern coasts of Somalia, the Portsmouth-based frigate was asked to shepherd the Fadhil Rabi into port.

"It's very rewarding for my ship's company to help to ensure the safe and timely delivery of much-needed food aid to an area of the world that has been so blighted by shortages and starvation," said Capt Walliker.

"This, and our role in deterring and disrupting piracy in the region – something that we have all trained long and hard for – means that Richmond has been involved in a very demanding but fascinating deployment thus far."

An estimated two-fifths of Somalia's populace rely on the UN food handouts – more than a quarter of a million tonnes of food is delivered to the country, almost all of it by sea, every year.

## Fishermen saved by 771

FIVE fishermen owe their lives to naval aviators after they were rescued from their sinking boat.

A 771 Naval Air Squadron Sea King from Culdrose was scrambled shortly after midnight on March 11, responding to an SOS from the 49ft Ben My Chree, 17 miles north-east of the Scilly Isles.

The boat was taking on water in worsening seas and the crew were unable to stem the influx.

Rescue 193 arrived on the scene minutes later with pilots Lt Cdr Jerry Barnbrook, Lt 'Chalky' White, observer and aircraft commander Lt Cdr Simon Daw and aircrewman CPO Jason Bibby aboard.

At first the aviators tried to save the vessel, hoping to winch a pump down to the fishermen to bale out the water. It quickly became clear that the pump wouldn't be effective and there was every chance the fishing boat would sink, so CPO Bibby was lowered down to winch the five sailors to safety in co-operation with the lifeboat from St Mary's.

Despite the fact that the Ben My Chree was in danger of imminent sinking, her crew remained calm – they were praised by Falmouth Coastguards for constantly providing accurate and detailed information about the boat's status which helped the rescue mission tremendously – and all five men were airlifted to safety.

In the end, Ben My Chree remained afloat but the boat was not believed to be salvageable.

## Honour for Shoreham

HMS Shoreham enjoyed the highest honour her namesake Sussex town can bestow as she paid a rare visit to the South Coast.

After more than a dozen years' ties with Shoreham-by-Sea and the district of Adur, the Sandown-class minehunter was granted the freedom of the borough.

After the title was bestowed on Lt Cdr Sarah West, Shoreham's Commanding Officer, and her 40-strong ship's company, the sailors were led through the streets of the small seaside town by the Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth as they exercised that freedom for the first time.

Once exercised, the Shorehams were in need of refreshment – provided by an official reception in the town's community centre.

Since Shoreham transferred with the rest of the Sandown-class fleet to Faslane, visits by the ship to West Sussex haven't been as regular as her days when she was along the coast in Pompey.

But Adur Council leader Cllr Neil Parkin said links between the ship and her namesake town remained strong.

"To my knowledge, Shoreham has never seen or done anything like this before," he added.

"We've always enjoyed a good relationship with the ship and crew and love welcoming them to port."

## Disaster strikes Raleigh

THERE were bloody scenes at HMS Raleigh as doctors and medics from across the South West dealt with an explosion aboard a ship.

The Torpoint establishment hosted an exercise for the civilian emergency services to hone their skills coping with a major disaster.

Raleigh's First Aid school provided the setting as students from the ambulance service and Derriford Hospital were tested on their ability to manage process, assess and treat a large number of casualties – provided by Raleigh personnel in full make-up (and a bit of dodgy acting...) and would-be paramedics from Plymouth University.

That meant trainees on the Major Incident Medical Management and Support Course entering smoke-filled compartments, calming the injured down, helping them out, putting some into decontamination tents if necessary, and sorting out a suitable hospital or medical centre for the casualties to be treated at subsequently.

The (fake) bloody exercise was the culmination of three days' instruction, which is carried out at Derriford's ambulance training college. Course directors look for a different location for the big exercise – anything from a mock pile-up on the motorway to a disaster in a shopping centre or sports stadium. This time around they plumped for Raleigh.

"We've used the facilities at Raleigh before – they are excellent for this type of training and the support we receive from the Royal Navy staff is excellent," said the course's clinical tutor Graham Kemp.

For Raleigh personnel this wasn't purely a chance to don make-up and fool around for a day – there was a serious side to the 'disaster'.

"For our trainees, the exercise was a great experience as they prepare to qualify as medical assistants," said PO(MA) Dan Raisbeck.

"The training we provide is as practical as possible to prepare sailors to deal with the worst-case scenarios on board ship or on the battlefield."



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## Argyll on the Tyne

HMS Argyll paid a three-day visit to Newcastle on the latest stage of her regeneration.

The ship is both Britain's oldest Type 23 – and its most advanced; Argyll was the first ship in her class to undergo a second refit, making her the most potent of the 13-strong 23 'clan'.

Since emerging from refit in Rosyth last year, the Devonport-based frigate has been conducting extensive sea trials.

Most recently Argyll's been testing her improved air defence capability and re-learning the art of operating with a Mk8 Lynx of 815 NAS in the North Sea.

To take a break from those and charge batteries ahead of two months of operational sea training with FOST, the frigate headed up the Tyne.

Although not open to the public during her weekend in North Shields, Argyll did host various local groups, including members of the RNA, Sea Cadets and undergraduates eyeing up a career in the Armed Forces.

## Mersey's reef encounter

WHILE HMS Cumberland, York and Westminster were thrust into action off Libya, patrol ship HMS Mersey was charged with saving life in home waters.

The life in question being marine life – pink sea fan coral to be precise.

The fishery protection ship was asked to patrol the northern stretches of Lyme Bay by the Marine Management Organisation, guardians of the waters around the UK.

Experts at the MMO are concerned by the fragility of the coral in Lyme Bay – it's one of the richest reef areas around the UK – and the very-slow-growing pink sea fan (*eunicella verrucosa*) is particularly susceptible to damage by fishing nets.

Mersey's patrols off the coasts of Devon and Dorset helped towards the 4,746 miles clocked up by the ship during her work periods in February.

Over the four weeks of the year's shortest month, the patrol ship's boarding team inspected 42 vessels, cautioned eight, fined one on the spot (to the tune of £4,500) and reported another trawler to the MMO.

Meanwhile the ship's company have set themselves the challenge of rowing 461 miles... which is a rather precise figure.

The Mersey men and women have vowed to complete the 'Four Rivers challenge' – covering the distance of the rivers for which all four ships in the class are named.

So that's Mersey (70 miles), Tyne (62), Severn (220) and Clyde (109) – 461 miles in all – to be completed on HMS Mersey's rowing machines all for charity of the Mayor of Sefton, the ship's affiliated borough.

There are only 393 miles to go as Lt Crocker and Finnigan have completed 60 and 50 km stretches (the rowing machines measure in metres...).

## Jacquespeak

BRITAIN'S ranking admiral and his French counterpart met in the Admiralty Boardroom to discuss the latest steps towards co-operation between the two navies in the wake of last autumn's defence and security treaty between London and Paris.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope and *Chef d'état-major de la Marine Amiral Pierre-François Forissier* discussed the finer naval details of the treaty, which will ensure long-term collaboration among all three Armed Forces on both sides of the Channel.

The aim is to share equipment, research and development costs, training assets and personnel, with a longer-term vision of a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, while at all times, ensuring both nations retain the ability to conduct national tasks.



Picture: LA(Phot) James Crawford, FRPU West

# Iron Duke's echoes of '91

WITH the glow from her quarterdeck lights just bright enough to make her name legible, HMS Iron Duke enjoys her first night in Dubai at the beginning of a challenging spring and summer.

The UAE metropolis is the No.1 holiday and shopping destination in the region... but another famous Gulf city has been the focal point of the Portsmouth's frigate's recent operations: Kuwait, 500 or so miles to the northwest.

It is 50 years since Kuwait gained its independence and, amazingly, 20 years since Kuwait was liberated from Saddam Hussein's brief but brutal occupation during the first Gulf War.

The twin anniversaries prompted '50/20' celebrations in the emirate with senior figures from the 1991 war – then premier Sir John Major and senior commanders Cdre Chris Craig, Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine and General Sir Peter de la Billière – were among 200 guests attending a commemorative reception aboard Iron Duke.

The frigate herself was in the final throes of construction at the Yarrow yard in Govan back in 1991 (she was launched within a week of the war's end), while a young chap called Nick Cooke-Priest was undergoing initial officer training at Dartmouth.

Fast forward two decades and Iron Duke's conducting her first Gulf patrol with a now Cdr Nick Cooke-Priest at the helm.

"The international effort to liberate Kuwait took place shortly after I joined the Royal Navy and, like many, I vividly remember that operation," he said.

His operations officer, Lt Cdr Richie Hewitt, added: "It was a great privilege and fascinating to meet Sir John, Sir Peter and the rest of the Gulf War commanders – and to hear the stories behind the headlines."

After a rest day Iron Duke returned to sea. Barely 40 miles from Kuwait City are the two Iraqi oil platforms which drive the latter country's economy.

Responsibility for safeguarding the older Khawr al Amaya platform, closer to the Al Faw peninsula, is already in the hands of the Iraqi Navy and Marines.

Not so the newer and more capable Al Basrah terminal. Yet. By the end of 2011, its defence too should be in the hands of its countrymen.

After an initial series of 'smoking barrel' exercises to drill responses to potential threats, Iron Duke settled down to defence watch patrols of ABOT.

Many of the ship's company were able to get off the Iron Duck for a day – either to tour the Al Basrah, or to join the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Paul Hamilton, also patrolling the same waters.

"We were really well looked after by the team in the Paul Hamilton, despite the lack of beer!" said WO Garry Parkes, Iron Duke's EWO. "I was really struck by just how similar the way they do business is to the way we do ours."

After two weeks on patrol, the Type 23 returned to Kuwait, this time to host 'sea days' for the Kuwaiti Staff College, which trains officers from Kuwait and other Gulf states along similar lines to its British counterpart, and has several British officers on its staff.

Over two separate sea days, Iron Duke gave 100 staff and students practical demonstrations of maritime operations, from air defence training in the operations room, through a boarding exercise, to fire-fighting and damage control.

The two days, said Cdr Chris Ayres, Royal Navy Directing Staff at the College, offered "an invaluable experience for our students from Kuwait and other nations to help inform their view of a 'World Class Navy'."

Iron Duke's Commanding Officer understandably agrees, praising his men and women for delivering "a polished and professional product at every step."



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## 814 enjoy ping time

BRITAIN's No.1 sub-hunters enjoyed plenty of 'trade' as they joined the world's Navies on an intensive war game in the Med.

The Flying Tigers flew 1,400 miles across western and southern Europe to Sicily to join NATO allies for Proud Manta 2011 – the first time a Fleet Air Arm squadron has taken part in the biggest anti-submarine exercise of the year.

814 Naval Air Squadron decamped from their home at Culdrose in Cornwall to Sigonella in Sicily in the shadow of the snow-covered slopes of Mount Etna.

Ten nations – the UK, US, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Spain, Turkey, Belgium and host nations Italy – sent ships, submarines and helicopters and aircraft to Proud Manta (previously known as Noble Manta), using the Ionian Sea to the east of Sicily as their 'playground'.

There were rich pickings for the hunters: half a dozen submarines (one Greek, one Italian, one Spanish, one American and two Turkish) acted as the hunted, but also turned hunters themselves as they tried to attack the surface ships intent on tracking them down.

For the Flying Tigers, this was the squadron's second sustained overseas exercise in the past six months; 814 deployed en masse last summer on the Auriga deployment to the USA and carried out some extremely useful 'pinging' with US and Chilean boats acting as their prey.

For Proud Manta, eight surface ships and 19 aircraft did the hunting – and, in addition to the six real submarines, exercise bosses threw 'gliders' (low-cost unmanned underwater vehicles) into the mix as well for the first time.

With all this kit, it was hardly surprising that the war games proved a really good test of 814's abilities (a *Flying Tiger* is pictured below hunting with Germany's FGS Lübeck).

"With lots of 'trade' and attacks aplenty, the exercise was just what the junior aircrew needed," said Tigers' CO Cdr Darran Goldsmith.

"The exercise was of immense training value. It introduced crews to a multi-national exercise concentrating purely on anti-submarine warfare and allowed them to demonstrate the Merlin's prowess."

As well as 814's Merlins, the Italian version of the helicopter was also taking part in Proud Manta (the aircraft is an Anglo-Italian joint venture).

Cdr Goldsmith said his men and women learned a great deal from working alongside their *Marina Militare* comrades.

"Junior engineering personnel benefited greatly thanks to the tactical tasking and liaison with our Italian counterparts when it came to the technical and practical understanding of the Merlin's many complex systems."

"Overall it was an outstanding engineering effort – the squadron didn't miss a single mission."

Exercise director Capt Walt Luthiger USN was similarly pleased with the outcome of the week-long workout – not least with the proliferation of submarines serving with the navies of the world.

"Proud Manta is like taking out good insurance in advance," said Capt Luthiger.

"There's no perceived threat to NATO, but training in this area is vital to NATO's state of preparedness."



## Brock 'n' roll

**THIS is what the Navy calls 'a bit sporty'.**

Waves crash over the bow of minehunter HMS Brocklesby as she struggles across the Bay of Biscay to take part in NATO exercises.

Hunts are not renowned for their seakeeping and the infamous bay is not renowned for showing clemency to mariners.

Perfect combination, then.

When Brock did complete her passage in company with the rest of NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1, she joined more than 20 vessels from 17 Allied nations on Exercise Noble Mariner.

The two-week international war games are focused on the Strait of Gibraltar – and the ability to keep this vital 'choke point' of global maritime trade open in the event of conflict.

For the mine warfare force that meant dealing with a plethora of dummy mines scattered in the waters off southern Spain – and for Portsmouth-based Brocklesby the opening stages of Noble Mariner provided rich pickings: five replica mines found by her diving and ops room teams – more than any other vessel taking part in the exercise.

"The dummy mines are designed to simulate the size and sonar picture of a real mine and so Noble Mariner has been extremely useful in keeping the crew's skills honed in detecting mines," said CO Lt Cdr James Byron.

"We have done a lot of this work in the last few months on Joint Warrior in October and during Operational Sea Training in December and so to already have five drill mines on deck shows that this effort has paid off."

In addition to minehunting, the exercise has seen the Spanish Navy act as 'bad guys', using fast patrol boats and helicopters to harass the NATO force.

In Brocklesby's case, the ship was attacked by a helicopter flying at under 50ft, skimming the wave tops as the Hunt-class ship manoeuvred at top speed (up to 17kts) trying to keep her close-range weapons trained.

The ship is attached to the NATO mine warfare group – which comprises ships from the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, and Poland – until July.

In addition to working in the Med, the ships will be carrying out real and dummy mine disposal in waters off Holland, France and Portugal *inter alia*.

"Although under the NATO banner, each ship has different procedures for tackling fires, floods, intruders and a whole manner of incidents," explained Lt Cdr Byron.

"It is essential that communications work across the language barrier is effective and everyone pulls in the same direction."

Before Noble Mariner kicked off, Brocklesby put into the south-eastern Spanish port of Cartagena where LET(ME) Jonathan 'Nobby' Hall and PO(ME) Ian 'Spoons' Spooner jumped ship

with their bicycles and vowed to catch up with M33 170 miles away in Almeria having raised more than £550 for the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity courtesy of shipmates dipping into their pockets...

...which they did (despite the rugged Spanish coastline) 48 hours later with the sun beginning its descent beyond the horizon. The two intrepid riders found the ship waiting for them, plus a film crew.

Brocklesby's exploits are now being covered by the team behind the 2-6 quarterly naval DVD magazine programme – they wanted to experience (and film) life on a small ship and champion the work of the RNRMC. So two birds killed with one stone. For the cyclists, the toughest part of the entire ride was actually the boat transfer back to the ship: the boats had to transfer the TV crew and their filming equipment into Almeria harbour, and then bring back the charity pair and their bikes.

## Somerset top of the class

DEEDS in the Gulf and off the Horn of Africa earned HMS Somerset the title of the Royal Navy's 'top frigate'.

The Type 23 earned the Fleet Frigate Effectiveness Trophy – which means she can fly a blue and white efficiency flag throughout 2011, while a rather fine piece of silverware is on display in her trophy cabinet.

The trophy dates back to 1919 when the then Prince of Wales presented it to the first winners, battle-cruiser HMS Renown (which also took the future Edward VIII on a tour of Canada and the USA).

There were no grand royal tours for Somerset, just a long hard slog to earn the award.

Last year the Devonport-based frigate spent 122 days on station in the Gulf protecting Iraq's oil platforms as well as commercial shipping in this fragile – and vital – part of the world.

In addition, the frigate conducted anti-piracy/smuggling/terrorism/people trafficking patrols in the Gulf of Aden/Horn of Africa/Arabian and Red Seas for good measure.

Flag Officer Sea Training and Rear Admiral Surface Ships Rear Admiral Chris Snow presented the efficiency trophy in person to the ship's company for their "outstanding" efforts east of Suez.

He added: "The ship's company as a whole – and as individuals – should be very proud of what they achieved throughout 2010."

And talking of historic trophies...

There's an old/new trophy in the headquarters of 820 Naval Air Squadron at Culdrose... and they didn't have to do anything to earn it (well, not recently).

Proudly on display in the Merlin unit's building is the Wilkinson Sword of Peace – one of the most coveted awards across the Armed Forces.

It was presented annually by the eponymous swordmakers until 2005, when it stopped producing military and naval blades, to the Forces ship/squadron/unit which contributed most to peace and goodwill at home or abroad.

In 2000 the sword went to Fort George for her aid efforts in Mozambique when the country was blighted by terrible floods.

The sword has been on display aboard the one-stop support ship, but with Fort George axed under last year's defence review (she's awaiting disposal in Liverpool), a new home was sought.

Instrumental in the rescue mission in Mozambique were the men and women of 820 NAS (still flying the Sea King Mk6 rather than today's Merlins), embarked on Fort George with the RFA Naval Support Unit (today the Maritime Aviation Support Force) and RN Supply and Transport Service (today part of the DLO).

It was decided that the sword, and accompanying citation, should go to 820, so Capt Jamie Murchie RFA, Fort George's final skipper, presented both to the air squadron's CO Cdr Jason Phillips.

Although the Wilkinson award is no longer, its spirit lives on; the Firmin Sword of Peace has taken its place, most recently awarded to a RN-RAF-Army team helping to stabilise Afghanistan.

## Divers head to Helmand

TWO more Navy divers have deployed to Afghanistan for six months to deal with the scourge of improvised bombs.

PO(D) Gareth Buffrey and LS(D) Simon Day, both from Fleet Diving Unit 2 on Horsea Island, are spending six months in Helmand.

The senior rating is mentoring Afghan bomb disposal teams and accompanying them on patrols while his shipmate is working with the Coalition Force Training Team bomb experts based at Camp Bastion.



The Royal Maritime Club  
(Formerly The Royal Sailors' Home Club)



**-NOTICE-**

The 147th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth, will be held in the Trafalgar Ballroom of the club on Tuesday 10th May 2011 at 1030.

Commanding Officers are requested to encourage maximum attendance from their ships and establishments. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND



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# 'Powerful bond' wrenched apart

**THERE'S something suitably poignant about this photograph.**

The ship's company of HMS Campbeltown line the frigate's flight deck in Procedure Alpha as the Type 22 makes for the Kilbrannan Sound having paid her final visit to her namesake Scottish town.

What you can't see from this angle, of course, is the large numbers of people in the small port lining the waterfront to pay their respects.

Nor can you hear the echo of the 11-gun salute the warship fired.

As the sound of the final round reverberated around the town the sailors cheered residents who had come out to bid her farewell.

The frigate spent five days in Kintyre as she thanked the Campbeltown community for its support during the 22 years the Type 22 has served her nation.

The ship's company attended a service of thanksgiving in a church, paraded through the streets of the fishing port and took affiliates to sea for several hours.

They also invited schoolchildren onboard for tours, hosted a farewell reception for local dignitaries and opened the gangway for a couple of hours to allow the general public one last look at the 5,300-tonne warship.

"A powerful bond has developed between us over the years, and so sailing from our affiliated town for the last time has been a wrench," said Campbeltown's final Commanding Officer Cdr Keri Harris.

"We leave in our wake great friendship and affection, epitomised by the generous hospitality afforded to my entire crew over the visit. It is hard to imagine any other small town in the British Isles providing such a busy and exciting programme of events for a warship.

"There have been many highlights but, for me, the town parade and church service held in the ship's honour were the most moving; they brought into focus the sense of loss being experienced by the town as Campbeltown prepares to decommission early."

The plug was pulled on all four remaining Type 22 frigates last October under the Strategic Defence and Security Review; Chatham has already decommissioned, while Cornwall and Cumberland will pay off once they return from their current deployments.

In Campbeltown's case, the ship was gearing up to head to the Indian Ocean on anti-piracy duties when news of her demise was announced.

Instead, she's spent the final months of her active RN career around the UK helping to train pilots, navigators, submariners, cadets from Dartmouth and warfare officers.

His ship has already said her farewells to the city of her birth, Liverpool, where she followed a succession of RN warships to berth on the Mersey in recent weeks at the impressive cruise liner terminal in the shadow of the Liver Building.

More than 1,800 people took advantage when the ship's gangway was opened to visitors; the frigate also invited Sea Cadets from across the North West aboard for the last time.

"Now we are faced with the reality of decommissioning a fine warship and disbanding her close-knit crew, which was never going to be easy," Cdr Harris added.

The frigate was due to enter Devonport for the final time on March 31 followed by the formal act of decommissioning on April 7.



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# Families briefed on Herrick 14

THE men and women of 3 Commando Brigade who are deploying to Afghanistan have been trained and prepared for the six-month task ahead.

But those left behind have not been forgotten.

The families and friends of the Royal Marines of 42 Commando are the latest to have been briefed on what to expect during the months when the Naval Service takes the lead in Helmand Province.

Around 1,500 relatives and friends gathered at the Commando's base, Bickleigh Camp on the edge of Plymouth, where they were addressed by CO Lt Col Ewen Murchison.

In what was described as the most comprehensive information-sharing exercise many veterans of Afghanistan could remember, Lt Col Murchison gave details of where and why the green berets were deploying, and how families qualified for benefits and the troops for extra pay.

He told them how well-trained and prepared his troops were for their mission and how to make contact with them once away from home.

Families are also offered support through welfare services such as the Naval Personal and Family Service (NPFS) and Royal Marines Welfare.

Lt Col Murchison acknowledged the trauma and stress the families and the marines would be under, but said he hoped the audience was reassured and given extra confidence their loved ones were as well-prepared, trained and equipped as possible and that he took responsibility for their well-being and safe return.

"From my experience of operating in Afghanistan I can say there have been improvements in quality of protective kit and weapons and weapons systems," he said.

"These improvements have come about through experience and analysis in Afghanistan."

Around 650 members of 42 Cdo will be deploying to Afghanistan in the coming weeks as a vital element of 3 Cdo Brigade.



# Red-eye flights in the Green Zone

IT'S THE middle of the night, a few thousand feet above the Helmand 'Green Zone', writes Sea King second pilot S/Lt Fred Durrant.

The moon is nowhere to be seen and it's so dark that we can't see the line of the horizon, let alone the ground, towards which we will shortly be rapidly descending.

The other aircraft in formation appears only as three lights – the fuselage indistinct.

The mind is focused; the next Landing Site (LS), somewhere in the vacuum of darkness below, is ready.

The radio crackles as the Joint Tactical Air Controller confirms our clearance: "LS is clear and secure, beware enemy forces operating to the north and west; you are to ingress and egress from the south-east. Over."

This is our indication to commence the run-in and the lever is lowered to initiate the tactical descent.

This is the view from the cockpit of the Royal Navy's Sea Kings from 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons of the Commando



● S/Lt Fred Durrant

Helicopter Force (CHF), working for the Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan) operating in Red Illum (RI).

RI is classed as any night where the light levels are so low that the Night Vision Goggles (NVG) struggle to work effectively.

In the UK this is not a huge issue due to the amount of cultural lighting and differing terrain, which plays well with the NVGs.

Over Afghanistan's low-contrast terrain, in RI and no ambient light, it is incredibly dark.

The definition of the ground through NVG does not start to become visible until around a few hundred feet, naturally making the job somewhat trickier.

Without looking through the goggles, crews are simply faced with an inky blackness, other than a few blinking lights from Camp Bastion or one of the local towns.

It is as a result of this RI condition, encountered for many of the nights in Afghanistan, that the Sea King crews, or 'Junglies' as they are more commonly known, have made a name for themselves.

Operating in such conditions requires additional training, a slightly heightened awareness of one's surroundings and use of techniques and equipment not routinely employed by other helicopter forces.

One such piece of kit is Display Night Vision Goggles, which were introduced to the Jungly world relatively recently.

It is essentially a fast jet's 'head up display' (HUD), which is mounted on the end of one tube of the NVG.

It is an invaluable asset, showing essential data such as navigational information, engine performance and height.

Without it RI operations would be considerably more challenging.

So we return to the Sea King pair, currently descending into the RI murk of the Green Zone.

As we descend, the height is called and the crewman and door gunner respond with 'guns outboard'.

The radar altimeter begins tracking; a quick movement of the collective lever confirms the two Rolls-Royce Gnome gas turbine engines are responding correctly.

As the aircraft descends to low level the ground is still not visible and the aircraft is initially levelled out.

As the Patrol Base location becomes clear, the height is nudged downwards, all eyes in the aircraft trained outwards.

By now, as the surrounding area becomes clearer and the definition of the LS becomes more obvious, the aircraft is manoeuvred onto a final approach for the landing.

As the aircraft descends the final few feet it is engulfed in a cloud of dust thrown up by its own downdraft.

This story is true of most nights for the RN Junglie Sea King crews.

It is now standard for crews to only have a tiny percentage of day flying hours at the end of a tour in



● (Above and below) Royal Navy Sea Kings of the Commando Helicopter Force operating in Afghanistan

Pictures: LA(Phot) Alex Cave

Afghanistan.

Credit is to be given to the supporting engineers who work tirelessly to keep the Sea Kings in the air, in conditions that range from searing heat and dust storms to freezing cold and torrential downpours.

It is no mean feat, for which the aircrew and – more importantly – the ground forces that we support are most appreciative.

Most importantly, this all goes to show the Junglies are still at the

forefront of battlefield helicopter aviation and are an invaluable asset to not only the Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan), but also to the wider Royal Navy and Joint Helicopter Command.

RI operations are just another feather in the cap of the CHF, and serve to remind all that this part of the Fleet Air Arm continues to support troops all around the world, from land or sea, in rain or shine, day or night – and now in Red Illum.

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# Camp Bastion training uprated

A NEW centre offering the latest training from the best instructors has opened for business in the main British base in Afghanistan just as the Royal Navy takes the lead in Helmand Province.

Training within Camp Bastion has been stepped up with the establishment of the new facility, designed to conduct Reception, Staging and Onward Integration (RSOI) training for all military personnel arriving in Afghanistan.

The facilities were developed over a period of three weeks and include a briefing tent capable of holding 350 personnel, a headquarters and welfare area, and accommodation and ablution blocks.

Last year an Afghan compound was built to provide realistic training in a representative environment.

To this a driver training centre has been added, offering training across a wide range of vehicle types.

Two Roll Over Drill and Egress training (RODET) mechanisms – mock-ups of vehicles on a pivoting platform – enable personnel to



● Weapon training at Camp Bastion

Picture: Cpl Mark Webster (RLC)

practise escape techniques if their vehicle rolls whilst on patrol.

The RSOI training package mainly provides refresher training for personnel on their arrival in theatre.

There are three tiers of mandatory training, depending on the role personnel will undertake

whilst in Afghanistan.

Category 1 is for those personnel whose duties are routinely located within the Main Operating Base (MOB).

All new arrivals must complete these first two days, which consist of a series of briefings and personal weapon shoots.

Category 2 training (five days) is for personnel whose duties take them outside of the MOB.

This includes counter-improvised explosive devices training, through a variety of scenarios, patrol skills, cultural awareness and vehicle drills.

The seven-day Category 3 tier is for those who duties cover the whole spectrum of operations in Afghanistan, including time on heavy weapons systems, Forward Operating Base defence and compound clearance.

Lt Col Andy Howard, Commanding Officer 32 Engineer Regiment and Commanding Officer for the Regulating Headquarters, said: "The improvement of all training and administrative facilities represents a huge step forward in how we deliver RSOI."

"My aim is to ensure that the personnel entering theatre for the first time receive the latest training, from the best instructors."

During the change of personnel in the coming weeks more than 8,000 troops will pass through this new facility.



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# Putting the OC in Ocean

LAST month we featured the tale of officer cadets from Dartmouth experiencing their first sustained spell at sea on an assault ship in the throes of a 'mini OST'...

...and this month we feature officer cadets from Dartmouth experiencing their first sustained spell at sea on an assault ship in the throes of a 'mini OST'...

Different ship, different cadets.

The different ship is HMS Ocean (last month it was Albion), the different cadets are, er, 60 different cadets.

The BRNC cadets are spending ten weeks with the Mighty O on Initial Fleet Time – experiencing life on board from the bottom up, as a junior rate, so they gain an understanding of the work – and working/living conditions – which will serve them in good stead as young leaders.

They join Ocean as the ship undergoes Directed Continuation Training – mini OST, tailored to meet the ship's requirements for her impending programme.

That impending programme includes a lot of flying: Apaches, Chinooks and Merlins will all be touching down and lifting off from the flight deck this spring.

Before you can think about learning the art of leadership, you need to find your way around Ocean: Britain's biggest warship, miles of passageways and 1,000+ compartments.

That took a week and when the Os were happy that the cadets had completed the mandatory safety exam, the rookie officers could go to sea with the helicopter carrier.

"For such a big ship, we don't get given a lot of space," said OC Craig Kavanagh. "You get used to it pretty quickly, though, and we're getting better at living so close together."

Each of the ten weeks aboard sees the cadets spending time with a different department to get a cross-section of the constituent parts which make up a capital ship. And each department expects the cadets to muck in.

"The galley's renowned for offering plenty of experience in chopping and peeling, and the marine engineering department has a large bucket of elbow grease on its kit list," explains Judge Pickles. (That's Lt Cdr Judge Pickles, Ocean's senior air traffic controller, not the hang 'em high law man...)

Now some people might think that the cadets are allocated the gash jobs... But 60 extra bodies on board are particularly useful if you're conducting a FOD-plod on a 600ft-plus flight deck before any helicopter operations can begin (as pictured below by LA(Phot) Guy Pool).

The plod – searching for Foreign Objects which might Damage a helicopter – is not something all the cadets are likely to experience again.

Aside from RN cadets, the group experiencing IFT on Ocean were also drawn from overseas navies, including the Middle East state of Oman.

"Working alongside the Royal Navy is interesting – I serve in the Omani royal yachts, where we do things differently," said OC Al Maskari.

"It's good to learn new ways and the ship's company are very helpful in explaining why they do things."

As for Ocean, the remainder of 2011 sees the ship conducting amphibious exercises at home and abroad, plus a couple of high-profile visits to UK ports.



Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Gadd, HMS Ark Royal



# In praise of Caesar

**W**HEN a great ship has so many fans across the nation, saying goodbye takes time.

The announcement last October that the Ark Royal was to be decommissioned was sudden and speedy, but the farewells have taken a little longer.

It was on a bitterly cold and foggy December morning that the great lady made her last entry into Portsmouth, trailing her decommissioning pennant. Since then, the carrier has not moved; the odometer remains fixed at 621,551 miles sailed.

It was not until a breezy, sunny morning in March that she had her final curtain call, a formal decommissioning ceremony in her home naval base.

In the intervening weeks she has said her goodbyes to the people of Portsmouth where she was based, Leeds where she was affiliated, and Newcastle where she was built and launched by the Queen Mother in 1981.

The sailors who gathered on her flight deck for the ceremony

numbered only about 150 – all that remained of her dwindling ship's company.

Most have dispersed to other ships and the others have been working to de-store the carrier – removing equipment that might be useful elsewhere in the Fleet, including her mighty engines; despite current talk of reactivating the ship in the light of recent global events, it would take upwards of six months to resurrect her.

The Ark's final commanding officer, Capt Jerry Kyd – now installed as captain of her sister Illustrious – returned to witness her last day as a commissioned warship and to pay tribute to her 25-plus years of service to the country.

He said: "The name Ark Royal resonates through history. There was an Ark Royal at the Armada, and the name has been famous in the annals of the Royal Navy for hundreds of years."

"Ark Royal has served this nation all over the world in tough

battles and paying farewell to her is a very emotional occasion.

"I know that this famous ship and her iconic name mean a great deal to many people."

"But we are here today not to mourn but to celebrate her great achievements and look to the future."

"Although this Ark Royal will be decommissioned, the new Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers are on their way, and they will be vastly more capable."

The decommissioning ceremony was held on the ship's flight deck, with about 900 guests including Rear Admiral Sir Donald Gosling; civic dignitaries; affiliates; former captains; senior officers and families of the 150 or so remaining ship's company.

The First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, was guest of honour.

The ship's chaplain, the Rev Martin Evans, led the service of decommissioning. He told the assembled guests: "This



is the first time I have taken a decommissioning service, and I asked my fellow chaplains what it is like. They told me it is a bit like a funeral.

"But like a funeral, I feel this should not be only a sad occasion, but also a celebration."

"In this case a tribute to a great ship and a happy occasion as we look back over her career."

After the service, which included the Naval prayer and hymn, the Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth played *Auld Lang Syne* as the White Ensign was lowered and carefully folded for the last time in more than 25 years.

It was presented to Sir Donald, who took over as the Ark's special friend on the death of her sponsor, the Queen Mother.

As for the fate of her beloved ship, it remains undetermined, with various plans mooted from the slightly bizarre (floating hotel/conference centre off Mablethorpe) to the more plausible (a floating helipad on the Thames to meet the growing needs of the capital for a dedicated airport for helicopters).

# Mighty Manch passes on the baton

FOR the very last time the ship's company of Her Majesty's Ship Manchester form up on the jetty in Portsmouth Naval Base.

The destroyer formally bowed out of the Senior Service on a fine late winter's morning as she was decommissioned in her home port.

Having sailed the equivalent of 35 times around the globe, Manchester – known affectionately by her 250 sailors as the Mighty Manch or Busy Bee – will sail no more as she makes way for the next generation of destroyers

gradually entering service.

Commanding Officers and crew past and present, affiliates and dignitaries from the namesake Lancastrian city witnessed the final chapter in the ship's career, as the ships' former chaplain Father Mike Wagstaff led the decommissioning ceremony with musical accompaniment from the Band of the Royal Marines School of Music in Portsmouth.

Manchester's final Commanding Officer, Cdr Rex Cox, told his ship's company and guests that the destroyer had been "a very special ship" which had left her mark "on everyone who has had the good fortune to serve on her."

He said HMS Manchester's passing was a day of sadness mixed with "great pride in a destroyer that has served the Navy with distinction and is

now ready to pass on the baton to the next generation, the Type 45s."

He continued: "It is the people however that have made this great ship what she is and each and every one of them has made their contribution over the years."

"It has been an immense privilege and enormous fun to be the last commanding officer of the Busy Bee and to command such a cracking ship's company."

Picture: LA(Phot) Kyle Heller, FRPU East



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# Monmouth mosaic

A MULTI-national task force, spearheaded by HMS Monmouth, clusters around the 'Mission Essential Unit': tanker RFA Orangeleaf.

They will defend her from Ginger – intent on destroying her at all costs.

On the bridge, lookouts are keeping their eyes peeled for any sign of the enemy, swooping from above, or skimming along the surface of the sea.

The ops room keeps the bridge informed of the threat – they've already picked up several suspicious contacts on radar.

As the enemy nears and fighter-bombers of the Ginger Air Force line up the Black Duke in their sights, the frigate's Principal Warfare Officer advises the Officer of the Watch how to manoeuvre the ship so the Type 23 can bring all her defensive firepower – Seawolf missiles, 30mm cannons and small calibre machine-guns – to bear.

The enemy aircraft dive towards Monmouth. and the ship's company will soon determine

whether the threat is neutralised successfully or not.

Well, actually, it's not solely down to the men and women of the Black Duke – a lot depends on the generosity (or otherwise) of the FOSTies who are giving F235 a thorough work-out off Plymouth.

After a much-needed break over the festive period, the Type 23 returned to sea for training moulded to her impending needs.

The frigate will soon be heading east of Suez to keep pirates in check – and the team at Flag Officer Sea Training have just the package: Directed Continuation Training.

Besides all the usual fire, flood, gates of hell stuff there's a lot of practising the sort of things the ship will be expected to carry out in the Indian Ocean.

Key to counter-piracy is one Royal Marines boarding team (courtesy of FPGRM) and one helicopter, Mk8 Lynx 'Blackbird' (courtesy of 815 NAS).

The two need integrating into beating heart and soul of the ship so that frigate-helicopter-commandos become as one.

In the case of Blackbird that meant a lot of weapons drills, day and night operations and the latest night-flying techniques (which includes turning off every external light on the ship to assist the aircrew as they conduct searches for surface contacts using their night vision goggles).

The Lynx is fundamental to boarding ops too, hovering overhead with a .50 gun in the hands of a Royal Marines sniper, while two RIBs packed with green berets and the ship's own boarding party move on the suspect vessel (a tug).

As for the gates of hell stuff, well there was a three-hour damage control exercise during which the ship's company 'lost' most of the frigate... and then fought their way back into compartments to re-take the ship.

Indeed, the FOST staff

– not easily pleased – gave the pumping and flooding teams a 'good' assessment (most get 'satisfactory').

As for that task group exercise, well that saw the Black Duke team up with Portugal's NRP Vasco da Gama and HMS York and Portland to shepherd Orangeleaf through the Ginger gauntlet.

With all the Hawks buzzing around and the ships manoeuvring wildly to thwart their attack, Monmouth closed to within 250 yards (a mere 750ft) of the tanker at times.

All in all, says Cdr Daniel Bassett, the Black Duke's Commanding Officer, the five weeks in the hands of FOST were a good work-out ahead of his ship's imminent tour of duty.

"Monmouth's achieved a tremendous amount within a short period of time," he added.

"We are ready for any eventuality – the Black Duke has the expertise and determination to succeed on this challenging deployment."

Pictures: LA(Phot) Stu Hill, FRPU North



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# The Lynx effect

**THE bomber community like to bang the drum about their constant 'at sea' presence.**

At sea, on operations, 24/7, 365 days a year. But they're not the only ones who bear a round-the-clock burden.

There is always a Lynx of 815 Naval Air Squadron on the front line whatever the time of day, whatever the date, whatever the location – typically the South Atlantic and east of Suez.

It is unthinkable to send a frigate or destroyer on deployment without its flight, a self-contained body of men and women (two aircrew, one aircraft controller, seven engineers/technicians) plus their helicopter, be it a Merlin of 829 NAS for some Type 23s, an 815 Lynx for 22s, some 23s, 42s, 45s.

In the past 12 months, the squadron has provided

- 13 flights to deploy with ships deployed;
- contributed to 22 exercises around the UK, one NATO exercise and 20 operational sea training periods.

All that has been carried out by 74 officers, 320 rating in 24 Lynx (21 Mk8s, three Mk3 trainers). Those helicopters clocked up

- 6,998 hours in the skies – *more than 41 whole weeks;*
- 3,600 sorties, 700 of them operational.

And those operational sorties

- led to four drugs busts (narcotics worth over £10m seized);
- scoured a length of coastline longer than the entire UK in search of pirates;
- intercepted 18 pirate action groups;
- wiped out seven pirate skiffs;
- fired 43,000 rounds of M3M heavy machine-gun ammunition.

In addition to ship's flights, 815's expected to support operations in home waters – there are always two Lynx ready to scramble on counter-terrorism duties, while a further helicopter is always ready should the Fleet Ready Escort – the on-call destroyer or frigate – need to put to sea.

Add to this the number of ships working up around the UK, flights undergoing R&R post-deployment or training.

In short, at any one time around two-thirds of 815 are committed at home or abroad.

This is a mission which the squadron has performed since 1981 when 815 stood-up at Yeovilton in its most recent incarnation as the headquarters squadron for embarked Lynx flights.

It moved to Portland in 1982 and was involved in the Falklands campaign, the Armilla patrol in the Gulf and relief operations off Lebanon, Aden and in the Caribbean.

Between August 1990 and February 1991 several flights were involved in offensive operations in the northern Persian Gulf, using their Sea Skua missiles to knock out much of the Iraqi Navy.

Parenting of flights was shared with 829 NAS until 1993 when the two merged, making 815 the largest helicopter squadron in the world.

The 815 story begins on the eve of World War 2 when the squadron was formed at RNAS Worthy Down with obsolete Fairey Swordfish torpedo bombers.

Despite its antiquated aircraft, 815 scored the Fleet Air Arm's greatest victory, crippling the Italian Fleet in harbour at Taranto in November 1940 – for the loss of just a single Swordfish. It is a victory celebrated by the squadron to this day.

815 remained a thorn in the Italian Navy's side, torpedoing the cruiser Pola at the Battle of Cape Matapan in 1941, sowing the seeds for the subsequent routing of five enemy ships by the Mediterranean Fleet.

The squadron remained in the Mediterranean for the next couple of years flying a mixture of Swordfish and Fairey Albacores, supporting operations in North Africa and Sicily.

Brought back to the UK, 815 was re-equipped with Fairey Barracuda torpedo bombers and sent to the Far East before returning to home waters for anti-submarine duties.

Through the 1950s the squadron operated Grumman Avengers and, finally, Fairey Gannets, before it converted to helicopters: the Westland Whirlwind in 1958 and from 1961, the more capable Wessex.

It took part in operations off East Africa (Tanzania), Indonesia and Aden during the era of the 'end of Empire', disbanding in 1966.

Picture: LA(Phot) James Crawford, FRPU West

## Battle Honours

Mediterranean .....	1940-41
Taranto .....	1940
Libya.....	1941-42
Matapan.....	1941
Burma.....	1944
East Indies.....	1944
Falkland Islands.....	1982
Kuwait .....	1991



Aircraft: Westland Lynx HMA8 SRU

Engines: 2 x 900hp Rolls-Royce GEM turbines

Rotor Span: 12.8m (42ft)

Length: 13.4m (44ft)

Speed: 180kt

Crew: one pilot; one observer; one aircrewman

Endurance: 320 nautical miles

Sensors: SATURN (Second-generation Anti-jam Tactical UHF Radio for NATO) Radio; Successor to IFF;

Weapons: 4 x Sea Skua missiles; 2 x Sting Ray torpedoes or Mk 11 Mod 3 depth charge;

2 x 12.7mm machine-gun pods;

1 x M3M heavy-machine gun

Motto: Strike deep

**Facts and figures**

## HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.84 – Rear Admiral Sir Thomas Fellowes

PERCHED on his horse in the shadow of the Goon-Goon rock, Cdr Thomas Fellowes prepares to lead a contingent of 'rocketeers' on a mission to rescue Europeans held hostage.

Our delve into the vast archives of the Imperial War Museum this month takes us to the Dark Continent and a strange – and rather forgotten – war in Abyssinia.

By the early 1860s, the ruler of the African nation – today Ethiopia – was feeling increasingly threatened by rebel tribes, so much so that he sought alliances with the great powers of Europe.

No alliances were forthcoming and Emperor Tewodros

(invariably Anglicised as Theodore) took umbrage... and took hostages.

European missionaries, emissaries, diplomats and courtiers, all were imprisoned at his capital/fortress of Magdala (roughly 150 miles north of present-day Addis Ababa) – and several years of negotiations failed to secure their release.

In the end it was London's patience which snapped first. A force of 13,000 troops, 26,000 porters and 40,000 animals in nearly 300 ships was sent to liberate the hostages... and teach the stubborn Abyssinian leader a lesson.

By far the largest part of the fighting troops under Lt Gen Sir Robert Napier were British and Indian soldiers, but a 90-strong 'naval rocket brigade' with a battery of a dozen 6lb rockets tubes and 1,000 rockets was formed from the ship's companies of some of the vessels supporting the expedition. As commanding officer of HMS Dryad, the 41-year-old Fellowes was chosen to lead the rocketmen.

The force faced a three-month trek through the inhospitable African terrain from the Red Sea

to Tewodros' stronghold.

Fellowes' men were resolutely naval, even on land; they referred to their mules as 'ships' and ended many evenings playing the hornpipe.

They were also supremely fit, marching better than the soldiers who vastly outnumbered them, and particularly impressing the journalists accompanying the expedition.

On Good Friday 1868, the liberators faced Tewodros' force on a plateau near his fortress.

Fellowes' rocket battery proved to be particularly effective and shattered Abyssinian morale. More than 200 rockets were fired during the three-hour battle which inflicted more than 2,000 casualties on the rebels; British losses amounted to no more than 20 dead and wounded.

It was another couple of days before Tewodros, who fell back on Magdala, released some 50 hostages plus their Abyssinian entourage (nearly 200 strong) and a menagerie of 300 pets.

The emperor's army largely surrendered, but not the ruler himself who defended his hilltop fortress to the end.

That proved to be a short-lived affair; the remaining Abyssinian troops quickly gave up in the wake of a barrage and assault on the stronghold.

Tewodros himself committed suicide with a pistol which Queen Victoria had sent as a gift.

His fortress was sacked – so much so that there is barely any trace of the capital today – and a rich booty of treasures, religious artefacts and Ethiopian manuscripts transported back to Britain eventually.

For Cdr Fellowes, the campaign was the highlight of an active career now coming to an end; he was invalided off his ship and retired as a captain five years later. He lived to the ripe age of 96, dying in 1923.

■ THIS photograph (Q 069832) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at [www.iwmcollections.org.uk](http://www.iwmcollections.org.uk), by emailing [photos@IWM.org.uk](mailto:photos@IWM.org.uk), or by phoning 0207 416 5333.







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# Action stations

## DID someone say 'action'?

Yes they probably did because the cameras are rolling.

The helicopters are whirring.

The RIBs and ORCs are racing over the water.

The hovercraft's, er, hovering.

And the marines, well they're abseiling, shooting, shouting. You get the picture.

This is the Navy's 'Swiss Army knife' – not our analogy, but the description given to his ship by HMS Bulwark's Commanding Officer Capt Alex Burton.

His 350 or so men and women – aided by the commando fliers of 847 and 848 Naval Air Squadrons – laid on quite a show in the middle of the Thames, the high-point of a five-day visit to Greenwich by the assault ship.

Bulwark is working her way back to front-line duties after an 11-month refit in her home port of Devonport.

In her time in the hands of Babcock engineers, 1,625 pieces of kit were revamped, a further 1,557 items manufactured, 398 tonnes of equipment moved on and off, 21 miles of electrical cabling installed, 8,000 litres of paint applied to the hull, the galley, laundry, heads and mess decks were spruced up, and the ship made fully night-vision compatible for operations involving landing craft and helicopters – all of which (and quite a bit more...) devoured 450,000 man hours and £30m.

After a month of shaking off the cobwebs (chief among them an anchor which resolutely refused to budge automatically and so required the ship's company to haul it in manually...) in the South Coast exercise areas, it was time for the final inspection to determine whether 18,000 tonnes of pusser's grey was fit to take her place in the Fleet again.

The man heading that assessment was Cdre John Kingwell – Commander UK Task Group and former CO of Bulwark's sister Albion.

He was joined by officials from Fleet HQ in Portsmouth and the Defence Equipment and Support organisation on the tour of Bulwark to decide whether to give the work carried out the thumbs up... or the thumbs down.

[Drum roll please.]

Well, you'll be pleased to know that the thumbs were up and Bulwark is now officially in the bosom of the Fleet.

So London ahoy...

The principal reason for that visit to the capital was to demonstrate to the powers that be – senior military officers, MOD officials, academics and defence experts – what Britain's two amphibious assault ships and their many constituent parts are capable of.

And what better way to do so than courtesy of a dynamic display?

It was the usual story of ship visits London. Pirates hijack ship. Sea King swoops in. Royal Marines rope down. Assault boats and hovercraft close in. Pirates overpowered.

All typical fare on the Thames on a Thursday afternoon in March.

Or perhaps not.

Which explains why there was a sizeable crowd on the Thames bank watching. And TV crews. And press photographers.

The warry stuff was obviously the most eye-grabbing part of the demonstration – but Bulwark didn't stop there. She also showed how her impressive ops room could be used to co-ordinate anything from an invasion to a major humanitarian relief mission, the chefs set up field kitchens and the medical team showed how they would deal with large-scale casualties.

All of which goes to show, explains Capt Burton, why Bulwark is "the country's very own Swiss Army knife – totally indispensable and phenomenally versatile."

"She packs a punch with our Royal Marines and delivers essential support to humanitarian and disaster relief operations."

"The past 11 months have presented a challenging mix of complexity, time management and detailed and intricate planning – all of which has been underpinned by the hard work and enthusiasm of Bulwark's ship's company."

On a lighter note, the assault ship hosted numerous tours from Sea Cadets and the Worshipful Company of Coachmakers and Coach Harness Makers to Chelsea Pensioners and St Dunstaners before departing the Thames.

After a brief visit to Den Helder in the Netherlands and a spot of maintenance in Devonport, L15 will spend the spring and summer undergoing trials and working up, culminating in taking over from her sister as flagship in the autumn.





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## Praise for new unit

BESPOKE accommodation has been opened for wounded Royal Marines in the latest stage of a state-of-the-art rehabilitation centre being built in Devonport.

Hasler Company was formed 18 months ago as a dedicated unit to help seriously wounded/injured commandos on the 'journey back to business' – recovery, rehabilitation and re-integration.

Key to the company's success will be a brand-new recovery unit which is due to open next year, featuring 72 beds for Service personnel, family bedrooms, consulting rooms, communal areas, garden and swimming pool.

In the interim, the former ballroom at the Drake junior rates' mess has been turned into a temporary rehabilitation centre.

The other interim step has been to provide accommodation suited to marines with limited mobility.

That's come in the form of Sparks Block, officially opened by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery (pictured above by LA(Phot) Dan Hooper chatting with a rehabilitating commando).

The admiral took advantage of the opening of the quarters to tour the Hasler facilities and chat to commandos making use of them.

"I can't praise Hasler Company enough," said Mne Aaron Moon, who lost a leg when a mine blew up his vehicle in Afghanistan.

"Not only does the rehabilitation centre have specialist equipment for guys like me who've lost limbs, but the management are very

supportive – they look after all our needs, the physical ones as well as other welfare."

Mne Tristan Sykes, also the victim of an improvised explosive device, said the thought and planning which had gone into facilities – dedicated car parking spaces, a single straight corridor, ground-floor rooms, sit-down shower – meant "the accommodation is up to the best I have lived in – equal to Headley Court. I could not ask for more."

Hasler is named for Maj 'Blondie' Hasler, leader of the Cockleshell Heroes, who was subsequently invalided out of the Service. As a civilian, he went on to be a renowned yachtsman who designed pioneering steering equipment.

The major's comrade on the legendary canoe raid was Mne Bill Sparks – hence the name of the accommodation block.

Vice Admiral Montgomery was impressed by his look around the company's facilities – but above all he was impressed by the Royals' can-do attitude.

"They've shown exceptional determination, resilience and bravery which has been proven on the battlefield – these same qualities have come to the fore to see them through recovery. They're an inspiration to us all," the admiral said.

The completed rehab complex which opens next year has been funded by the charity Help for Heroes and will be staffed by RN personnel.

## Cats eye up shows

THE sun's shining, the t-shirts are out in force, so summer must be imminent.

Which means it's time for the Fleet Air Arm's display team to perform again.

The Black Cats – two pirouetting Lynx Mk8s from 702 NAS which appear at air shows across the UK and north-west Europe – have unveiled their programme for the 2011 season when an estimated four million people will witness their aerobatics.

The helicopters are earmarked to appear at 15 shows between May and October performing a similar display to the 2010 circuit – with a few 'crowd-pleasing' improvements.

This year's Black Cats are Lt Chris Chambers (last year's No.2 pilot, now promoted to No.1), while Lt Dave Fleming steps into the No.2 shoes and Lt Mike Curd is team manager.

The aircrew are full-time instructors on 702 Naval Air Squadron at Yeovilton, devoting their spare time to the Black Cats (named for 'friendly' on-upmanship between sailors).

They're now perfecting their routines ahead of validation in May, which allows them to perform publicly. Money raised from the 2011 appearances will be donated to the RN Benevolent Trust and the RN Historic Flight, which keeps vintage Fleet Air Arm aircraft on the display circuit.

"2010 was a tremendous year for the display team," says Lt Chambers. "We're all really looking forward to the coming season. We've a lot of work to do between now and our first display, but we're working hard to put on another dynamic performance."

This year's shows are:

- Duxford – May 22
- Cosford – June 12
- Cotswold – June 18-19
- Waddington – July 2-3
- Yeovilton Air Day – July 9
- Wales National Air Show – July 9-10
- Culdrose Air Day – July 20
- Lyme Regis Lifeboat Week – July 23-31
- Southport – July 23-24
- Sunderland – July 30-31
- Eastbourne – August 11-14
- Guernsey – September 8
- Luchtmachttagen, Leeuwarden, Holland – September 16-17
- Sanicole, Belgium – September 18
- Duxford – October 16



# Tons of memories

SHIP's reunions – they're jolly occasions usually held in pubs, clubs or hotels.

But when your former commanding officer is the Prince of Wales, something a little grander is called for.

So when the Prince, 35 years after taking command of HMS Bronington, invited his old ship's company and their wives to a reunion, it was held in his London residence, Clarence House.

It was a reunion not to be missed for the sailors and their wives, even if it meant travelling from the United States or Australia to be there, as some of them did. They were all a little older and greyer (as the Prince pointed out) but delighted to talk about the old days.

Peter Still, who was coxswain in the Ton-class minehunter in 1976, said: "Bronington was brilliant, we had a wonderful time during the Prince's command."

"It was a very happy ship. He was a perfect commanding officer, he never once scratched the ship and he was exceptionally conscientious and fair to the ship's company."

He added: "Of course, having the Prince of Wales as your commanding officer was going to change the programme. We had some high-profile visitors, including the Queen and Lord Mountbatten."

Another guest was the Prince's naval valet, Ron Patterson, who worked for him for five-and-a-half years. He said:

**"The years I worked for the Prince of Wales were the best years I ever had. He included me in everything and I had a wonderful time."**

One department which saw a big change under a royal captain was the galley. Chef Mike Sinker, whose wife Marion was instrumental in organising the reunion, said: "I'd learnt my cookery skills with the Navy and worked with the Admiralty staff, but the food on Bronington was unusually exotic for a small ship – or any other naval ship, come to that."

He added: "I cooked quail for the first time – It had hung so long I thought it had gone off, but His Royal Highness said it was the best he'd ever had."

"We also had regular supplies of fresh salmon and venison, and if there was enough the lads all had it too. I think they found when they left the ship they'd developed expensive tastes."

The sailors also developed a liking for chocolate Bath Oliver biscuits. Writing in the book *HMS Bronington*, written in 1986, Capt Angus Sinclair recalled being a sub-lieutenant under training.

"The captain had a personal supply and was very generous to those on watch during the forenoon. It was well worth making certain that you were doing something useful on the bridge around 1030 because a plate of Bath Olivers would arrive, one for each person on watch."

"I was always there, putting a fix on a chart whether the chart wanted it or not and accepting (as if it were the first time I had ever had one) the biscuit."

Rear Admiral Roy Clare, the Prince's First Lieutenant in Bronington, thanked the Prince on behalf of the guests with a copy of the book, signed by all the ship's company and, for old times' sake, a reciprocal tin of chocolate Bath Olivers.

Admiral Clare told the assembled company: "We managed to rustle up a few reprobates of our shy and retiring crew, and we owe a great vote of thanks to the Prince for getting us together again."

"We had a very happy year. We hit nothing, we got around the course, we were well-fed and we had fun and games."



● Former leading cook Mike Sinker (left) and Bronington's former Executive Officer Rear Admiral Roy Clare share a joke with Prince Charles

He added: "We're all fitter now than our old ship is. She's falling apart, in fact she's not surviving – but we are, and that's the most important thing."

The Prince of Wales told his ship's company: "It's such a pleasure to see you all again and it's particularly pleasing to see men I remember as young sailors become prosperous, grey-haired and in some cases bald – it's quite reassuring."

He added: "Half the time I was terrified out of my wits by the thought of making the headlines if we ran into the jetty. Do you remember those spinning headlines on Pathe newsreels? They were a recurring nightmare."

"But we had some good laughs and many, many happy memories. I learnt Jackspeak from Ron and I have very happy memories of Lord Mountbatten's visit. I used to stay with him when I was training in Portsmouth and he was always giving me advice."

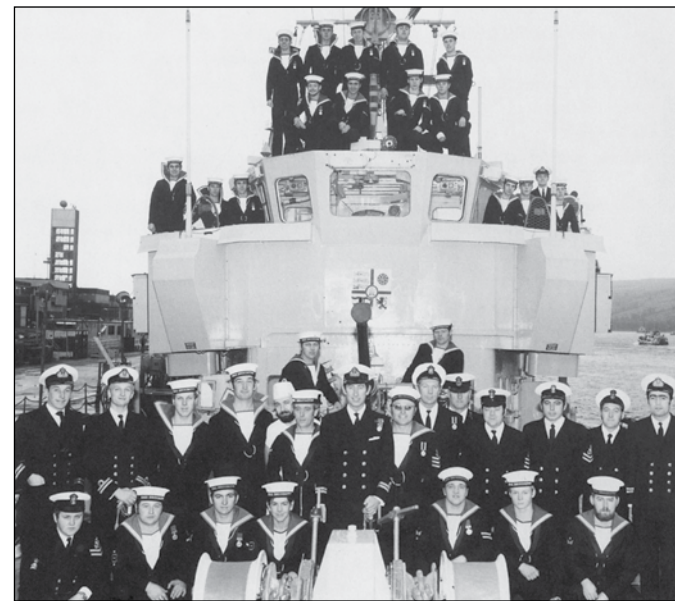
After the reception the ship's company invited the Prince of Wales to their run ashore at the Golden Lion pub near Clarence House, where he joined them for a drink and presented each man with an embossed wallet as a keepsake.

The Prince of Wales joined Dartmouth, where the Duke of Edinburgh and his great-uncle, Lord Mountbatten, had trained, under the graduate entry scheme in 1971.

He took command of Bronington in February 1976 and spent his final ten months of active service in the Navy in command.

The ship was paid off in 1988 after more than 30 years' service and was purchased by the Bronington Trust in 1989.

For several years she was preserved on the Manchester Ship Canal but in 2002, she became part of the collection of the Warship Preservation Trust and moored at Birkenhead. Since the closure of the trust, she has been stored at Birkenhead where she is falling into disrepair.



● All the Prince's men (part 1)... HMS Bronington's 'class of 76' pose with their commanding officer for a ship's company portrait; note the specially-created ship's badge which replaced the traditional crest during the Prince of Wales' tenure of command



● All the Prince's men (part 2)... HMS Bronington's 'class of 76' pose with their former commanding officer in Clarence House

2011 pictures: PO(Phot) Amanda Reynolds, DPR(N)



# Is it me or is the RN shrinking?

HE WALKS. He's cammed up. He's got a big gun. And now he talks too.

Two years since the launch of the officially-endorsed HM Armed Forces action figures range, a new batch of dolls has been introduced – now with sound effects.

Three figures, one each for the branches of the Services, have been brought out by manufacturers Character Options: an RAF police dog handler (plus dog), an infantryman from the Army and from the Senior Service, a Royal Marines 'stealth operations' figure (although quite how stealthy you can be with a Mini machine-gun is questionable...).

The voices of real Service personnel were recorded with each character reciting six phrases (such as 'objective secure' in the case of the commando) if you press them in the stomach (warning: don't try this with real marines...).

As with the non-talking figures already on sale, the new toys feature 'hawk eyes' – allowing the figures to 'look' left and right (not to be confused with the 'eagle eyes' feature on a popular action figure of the 1970s and 80s...) – and you can remove the doll's clothes and replace them with kit from another figure in the series such as the RN diver, upper deck gunner or RM sniper (or you can leave the 10in doll naked for the true commando experience...).

The 'stealth operations' marine retails for £19.99, requires three LR44 batteries and is only suitable for children aged five and above.

If ten inches of Royal Marine is too much to handle, then you can go smaller. Much smaller.

Available from Easter are the first Lego-esque 'play sets' in toys from the same firm.

The Character Building (geddit?) range featuring small figures – including a sailor, commando (one cammed-up green beret, one in body armour and helmet) and helicopter pilot – with various sets to construct from a RIB and docks to an Army quad bike and desert scene and, for the RAF, a Merlin. More miniature sets are due to be unveiled in the autumn.

See [www.character-online.com](http://www.character-online.com).



Characters not actual size

# To fly no more



THIS is a sight you will see no more in Cornish skies as more than 30 years of faithful service by the trusty Jetstream trainer came to an end.

Six of the propeller-driven aircraft flew over Culdrose air station for the last time on Friday as 750 Naval Air Squadron paid tribute to an aircraft which has trained two generations of Fleet Air Arm observers.

With the final course of rookie observers trained on the blue-and-white-liveried aircraft now complete, and the next not due to begin until the summer, the Jetstreams are being retired.

Come June four King Air 350 Avengers (which look remarkably similar to their

forebears...) will provide 21st Century observer training.

The new aircraft's kit better replicates what is found in the Fleet Air Arm's front-line helicopters, but 'dead reckoning' navigation will still be taught alongside the latest modern navigational techniques.

"Because 750 has been around for so long doing the same role, people tend to assume it doesn't change much and in a sense that is true: the core skills that are required by every observer haven't changed a great deal but the technology and equipment we use certainly has," explained 750's CO Lt Cdr Nick Armstrong. "We continue to teach many of the things

those observers of 50 years ago would have been familiar with but on modern equipment with modern techniques that more closely reflect how we operate on the front line. The King Air will allow us to do exactly that."

The Jetstreams trace their history back to the mid-60s (they were designed by Handley Page of WW1 heavy bomber fame...) and have been in service with the RN since the late 70s.

As for 750, it's been training observers – they 'fight' a front-line Fleet Air Arm helicopter, while the pilot deals with flying it – since the beginning of the 1950s.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Sterratt, RNAS Culdrose



## FALKLANDS 1982



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Picture: Riet Ven De Velde (British Antarctic Survey)



# Burgers and

AAAAH, summer...

The smell of chicken and burgers on the barbecue.

The gentle slap of waves against the hull.

The sight of an iceberg floating past...

We are not talking about a typical British summer here but the Austral version, and a long way south at that.

HMS Scott has been covering the Antarctic beat normally

undertaken by HMS Endurance, and which will now fall to HMS Protector for the next three years (*see opposite*).

We mentioned in our last edition that the transit south from the Falklands to her Antarctic patrol was bumpy for the flat-bottomed ship.

"Despite recommendations from the old and wiser, several of the officers insisted on soup for lunch, though more was

worn than eaten," said Surg Lt Cdr Andy Vale, the survey ship's Medical Officer.

Naturally the weather remained a crucial factor in the work period off the frozen continent; it was sufficiently benevolent to allow most tasks to be achieved, though there was the odd change of plan.

Whilst down south, Scott was conducting work on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office and the British Antarctic Survey in and around the Antarctic Peninsula.

That meant a fairly broad range of tasks, from inspecting fishing vessels to visiting Antarctic research stations and unique areas of scientific interest.

In doing so, Scott was enforcing and observing the stringent environmental protective measures of the Antarctic Treaty, helping to ensure that the pristine nature of Antarctica is maintained for future generations.

In the shelter of the Antarctic Peninsula, the ship was able to conduct visits to 13 research bases, run by a variety of nations.

This was significantly more than in previous years, thanks to the clement weather and the presence of shallow draft W525 boats.

Each visit allowed the ship's company to see how different nationalities cope with life in the Deep Freeze.

A common thread seemed to be the importance of food.

From Chinese delicacies at The Great Wall of China Base, to afternoon tea and cakes at the British base at Rothera, Scott's sailors were able to sample food from all over the globe.

And while we are on the subject of food, the ship's company also enjoyed the aforementioned barbecue, wolfing down the grilled food before it chilled as they enjoyed the majestic scenery around them.

Images of the landscapes and

● This page, from top: Evening sun above Livingston Island; the abandoned Norwegian whaling station at Whalers Bay in Deception Island, South Shetlands; Antarctic barbecue; Scott loiters off the British Antarctic Survey base at Rothera; (above) One of Scott's sea boats sets off on a base visit; (opposite, from top): Scott anchored in the Neumayer Channel near Port Lockroy; checking the meat on the barbie; one of Scott's sea boats returns from checking the ice-choked Lemaire Channel; (above right): gentoo penguins at Port Lockroy

## Phot of the

"Do you fancy six weeks in the Antarctic?" was the question that arrived with PO(Phot) Ray Jones (pictured right) via email one Monday morning.

Six weeks down in the Antarctic on board HMS Scott taking photos? Ray did not need long to respond:

"Sounds good to me, I thought, so I immediately replied: 'Yes please.'

Having joined HMS Ark Royal some three months earlier for a two-year draft, I had since had the news that the ship was going to be decommissioned.

So the next few months were going to involve de-storing, a decommissioning ceremony, and sitting alongside the wall in Pompey until the ship's end date.

Not the most exciting of drafts, so this trip to the icy south was like a lifeline to me.

I immediately began preps for the trip, asking the LA(Phot) who went down to the ice the previous year for any top tips, drawing extreme cold weather clothing from stores (everyone else at stores that day was being issued desert combats...) and getting my flight details sorted.

One long flight later, I walked up the gangway of HMS Scott alongside at Mare Harbour in the Falkland Islands ready for my trip.

Now Scott is unlike any other ship I have served on.

Carpets throughout, able seamen are two to a cabin, leading hands and above get their own en-suite cabins.

For the very first time in my 15 years in the RN, I got my very own cabin. It even had a porthole!

After a busy few days in the Falklands with storing ship, and a watch changeover with a third of the ship's company flying home, we set off for the ice.

With the transit time down to the ice, and with a week in the Falklands each end of the trip, I was only going to have three



weeks on task.

Scott is flat bottomed so she can roll around quite a lot, but the trip down through the Drake Passage was fairly comfortable.

The furthest south I had been before was to South Georgia nine years previously on HMS Montrose prior to changing branch to photography.

I was keen to get ashore in Antarctica and put my photographic training to good use, and the ship had requested photographic coverage for this leg of their deployment, so they were keen to utilise me as much as possible.

It is a unique environment in which to work.



# icebergs

wildlife were captured officially by artist-in-residence Dafila Scott, granddaughter of the ship's namesake Capt Robert Scott, and PO (Phot) Ray Jones (*see below*), though the pair were up against stiff competition as members of the ship's company tried to photograph, paint and draw all that was seen.

Whether this was the dramatic, soaring cliffs and basalt towers of Lemaire Channel, the fur seals of Deception Island, colonies of gentoo penguins or killer whales off Rothera base, you could always find someone testing their skills as a budding David Bailey or Michelangelo.

Meanwhile Scott continued her deep-water survey work, mapping the Antarctic seas to ensure safe passage for vessels, not least the burgeoning number of cruise ships, both large and small, that are now visiting the region.

On completion of her time in the Antarctic, Scott returned to the Falklands for a much-needed re-supply and crew rotation –

for such a large ship, displacing 13,500 tons and measuring 131 metres in length, she operates with a crew of just over 50.

The Senior Rates took advantage of the sunny weather, and rode the 33 miles to Stanley on vintage chopper bikes, raising more than £3,000 for the MS Society and Hop Skip and Jump autism charity in the process.

All that remains – if all goes to plan – is the long journey home.

Which, of course, means even more work, as the ship scours the seas around her for data every nautical mile of the way across the deep oceans.

Capable of analysing many factors, including the contours of the sea bed, water salinity and temperatures, any passage is an opportunity to update charts and information.

By the time the ship returns to the UK – she is due back in home waters shortly after Easter – she will have surveyed more than 22,500 miles.



## New ice ship plugs the gap

THE Royal Navy will deploy a new ice patrol ship to the Antarctic at the end of this year – but HMS Endurance may still have a future.

In response to a question tabled by Viscount Montgomery of Alamein in the House of Lords on March 21, Defence Minister Lord Astor of Haver said that the MV Polarbjørn – to be renamed HMS Protector – would “provide the interim replacement ice patrol ship capability for at least the next three years while we consider the long-term future of HMS Endurance.”

Endurance was flooded in an incident off Chile in late 2008 and was brought back to the UK on a transporter vessel to await a decision on her future.

A three-year contract for Protector's lease and support – with an option for a further two years – has now been signed with preferred bidder GC Rieber Shipping, of Norway.

Answering a supplementary question from Lord Tunnicliffe, Lord Astor said: “We have yet to determine whether the long-term solution for delivering the ice patrol ship capability will be better met through replacing or repairing HMS Endurance,” – leaving open the possibility that the Red Plum could still return to the Antarctic.

A decision is expected to be made next year.

MV Polarbjørn – Polar Bear – is a commercial icebreaker which has been operating most recently in the Caribbean.

Completed in 2001 and displacing 4,985 tons, she can act as a polar research ship or subsea support vessel.

She is smaller than Endurance but, unlike HMS Scott, she has a flight deck – though as that is on the bridge roof there may be a need to modify the ship's configuration.

She is expected in Portsmouth next month to be fitted with specialist military equipment, and should commission in late June prior to deploying in November.

Her owner, GC Rieber, also owns the RRS Ernest Shackleton, currently chartered to the British Antarctic Survey.

HMS Protector has strong links with British interests in Antarctica.

The previous ship to bear the name – the sixth Protector – completed 13 Antarctic ‘seasons’ between 1955 and 1968.

She was launched in 1936 as a netlayer, seeing service in the North Sea, Atlantic and Mediterranean in World War 2 before being converted to an ice patrol ship in the early 1950s.

She was scrapped in 1970.



## Antarctic...



going out in the sea boat for a ten-minute transit ashore involves wearing extreme cold weather clothing, immersion suits, gloves, head-over to protect your face, helmet and goggles.

Even when it seems quite pleasant outside it is the wind chill that really gets to you.

I had to take extra care of my camera equipment as well.

Moving from the warm air-conditioned interior of the ship on to the upper deck frequently caused the lenses to mist up.

If I were planning to cover boat operations for example I would ensure that I went outside a good 10-15 minutes earlier than planned to allow my kit to acclimatise to the conditions.

When moving from the cold outside back into the ship the camera would be absolutely covered in condensation.

I found out that the gloves that I was issued with, as part of my extreme cold weather kit, gave me absolutely zero feel when trying to operate my cameras.

The first few times ashore were a learning experience as well, working out what essential gear was needed in my Bergen, and what were just nice-to-have items.

Every time we went ashore we had to be prepared for all conditions; knowing that if the weather closed in the ship may not be able to pick us up.

A Royal Marine would accompany us, and he would be carrying a tent, stove, rations, sleeping bag and so on.

Thankfully we never faced that situation.

Whilst down in the Antarctic we came across several cruise ships with passengers paying at least £6,000 for the privilege.

I am just thankful that I was given the opportunity to experience this part of the world.

I will probably never get the chance to come down here again, so I made the most of the trip.”

The views are just spectacular – although after a while you do become rather blasé. Oh look, another iceberg, another mountain...

I did find out that you couldn't get bored of photographing penguins, though.

Everyone loves photos of penguins, and I have sent absolutely loads of them home.

They don't half stink though! Trying to clean penguin poo off the bottom of my video tripod was one of the low points of the trip...

One of the first things that you learn out here is how to work effectively in the conditions.

Even a quick evolution like









## Gas turbines lose to pedal power

TWO cyclists from HMS Manchester set out to race their ship to Liverpool to raise money for Broughton House, a home for retired Service people in Salford.

The ship's tally was 553 miles by sea; the cyclists had to cover 285 miles over undulating land, and were slightly hampered by the need to sleep on occasion...

The duo – Logistics Officer Lt Cdr Dickie Underwood and Flight Commander Lt JJ Hesketh – set off at 8:30 on a chilly morning to cover 100 miles to Bicester, then the next day saw a 150-mile slog to the ship's affiliated Sea Cadets in Manchester.

The last stage was a 45-mile dash to Liverpool – which the cyclists triumphantly reached ahead of the destroyer.

Lt Hesketh said of the ride "It was the hardest physical exploit I have ever undertaken and immensely rewarding. The prospect of hundreds of miles stretching ahead of us was both

daunting and challenging and I am glad to say we were up to it.

"The money is still rolling in but should be well over £1,000 in total which is great, and Broughton House is a very worthy cause."

Lt Cdr Underwood added: "The race certainly had its moments, not least when we were down to one working knee between the two of us, still with 100 miles to do!"

## Stepping up for 40 Cdo

THEY leapt, wiggled and danced.

Over 60 body steppers donned war paint then worked up a sweat when they took part in a sponsored class in Winchester in aid of 40 Commando RM.

River Park Leisure Centre bosses waived both the cost of hiring the main hall and any class payment, enabling participants to raise around £1,600.

This is being used to refurbish the Welfare Lodge at Norton Manor Camp, so that relatives can stay in comfort when they visit the unit.

A dozen Royal Marines attended the event, drawing gasps and squeals from the body steppers when they gave an unarmed combat display before the class.

The commandos also danced their way through the class, taken by Philippa Wheble, wife of RN warfare officer Lt Max Wilmot.

Event organiser Ali Kefford said: "It was a very light-hearted event to raise money for a very specific purpose.

"What made it was the fact that so many marines were prepared to come all the way from Lympstone and Yorkshire on a day off to take part."



## Undaunted by cold

NOW the amazing thing about this story is that Royal Marines weren't doing it...

An hour's windsurfing, 350 miles inside the Arctic Circle. In winter. In temperatures of at best -15°C. In a raging snowstorm.

Three officers from HMS Dauntless – led by the destroyer's CO Capt Richard Powell – vowed to take to their boards on board the Type 45 when she headed to Norway for cold weather trials and windsurf as far north as possible to help commandos injured in the line of duty.

And when the ship reached a deep water anchorage some 70 miles north of Tromsø, Norway's most northerly city, that was about as far north as Dauntless would be going (1,350 miles from the North Pole), so time to suit up.

Before departing Portsmouth the windsurfers had discussed the kit they would need with the Royal Marines, Britain's experts in cold climate warfare; the green berets suggested dry suits, hats and goggles *inter alia*.

With two safety boats in the water and the ship's company on the upper deck to offer encouragement, carving messages of support in the snow settling on

the ship's side – see below – the trio (Capt Powell, weapon engineering officer Lt Cdr Matt Stratton and Mid Tom Forster, pictured above) took to their boards.

After about 15 minutes the windsurfers decided they wanted to swap their kit around... which involved getting wet.

"None of them was quite prepared for just how cold the water was, and after they had climbed back on to their respective boards and tried hauling up the sails, it became fairly evident that the cold was starting to take its effect," said Dauntless' marine engineer officer Lt Cdr Peter Lee.

But in true RN spirit, the three remained out on their boards for another 45 minutes before deciding to call it a day and return to Dauntless for warm showers and hot food.

Back aboard the destroyer the windsurfers vowed never to attempt anything quite so daft again.

That said, they are hoping to raise more than £5,000 when all the IOUs come good.

The money will go to the C Group, a charity set up in 2008 to help wounded and injured Royal Marines with their recovery and rehabilitation.



## Talent's deeps climb Kilimanjaro

FOUR submariners from HMS Talent flew out to Tanzania at the start of March to climb Kilimanjaro to raise awareness of the RNBT.

The four – who as submariners have had a little trouble sorting out their climbing training – tackled the Umbwe route.

CPO Darren 'Daz' Lunn said: "This route is regarded as the most challenging due to its fast ascent, but also the most rewarding due to the spectacular views gained."

The team – CPO Lunn, PO Paul 'Scrimmers' Scrimshaw and ED Adam 'Willie' Williams and ET Daniel 'Whisky' Walker (*three of whom are pictured above on a training walk*) – were planning on taking six days for the walk.

Daz said: "This is an event that we have had planned for a while but due to Talent's hectic running we have only been able to organise recently.

"But that doesn't mean the training hours have not gone in, with both the national and Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenges being completed."

If you would like to pledge your support, visit [www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/kilichallenge2011](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/kilichallenge2011).

## Footballing Harriers

A FOOTBALL team made up of stalwarts of 800 NAS is taking on a local Sunderland team in a charity match for Help for Heroes.

PO Dave Robson came up with the idea following on from a charity motorcycling event he organised last year.

He said: "I loved it last year. I went to Headley Court and saw first-hand what the money does."

The football clash will take place at Eppleton CW Football ground (where Sunderland's Reserve and Ladies teams play) in Hetton on April 2.

Find out more online: [helpforheroescharityfootballmatch.yolasite.com/](http://helpforheroescharityfootballmatch.yolasite.com/)



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\*Source: EngineeringUK



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INSPIRING LEARNING





# Telic and Tudor relic for Harry

WITH all eyes on Libya and, to a lesser extent, Afghanistan, it's easy for the public to forget that the men and women of the Royal Navy are still heavily engaged in another operational theatre: Iraq.

So it was welcome recognition for upwards of 100 sailors who've served their country in the Gulf that Prince Harry attended a medal presentation ceremony in Portsmouth Naval Base in the full glare of national publicity.

The media were out in force in the rain as the prince presented Telic medals to 33 sailors from HM Ships Grimsby, Middleton and Pembroke in his role as Commodore Small Ships and Diving.

The rotation of crews through the two Hunt and two Sandown-class minhunters permanently on station in the Gulf means pretty much the entire mine warfare community has served east of Suez in the past few years.

They shared their experiences of operations in the Gulf with Prince Harry – officially he's Lt Henry Wales of the Household Cavalry (Blues and Royals) – as he chatted both on the jetty and aboard HMS Cattistock.

The latter's crew have recently returned from a six-month tour-of-duty on her sister ship.

The prince was, said diver Richard Stanley who demonstrated his kit, "really chilled – not what I expected really."

"It's something I will never forget – he was a really nice guy."

Around 60 medals were presented to other sailors on parade by Rear Admiral Chris Snow, Flag Officer Sea Training

and Rear Admiral Peter Hudson, Chief of Staff Capability.

"It was a proud and memorable day for the Royal Navy's mine warfare community," said Capt Mark Durkin, Captain Mine Warfare and Fishery Protection.

"The sailors felt honoured to be able to tell Prince Harry about their deployment to the Gulf where maritime security operations ensure the right of free passage of maritime traffic and the continuation of maritime trade in the region."

After meeting several mine warfare sailors' families, Prince Harry visited the Mary Rose Museum to see progress on the Tudor warship's new ship hall.

His father famously dived on the wreck of Henry VIII's flagship 30 years ago.

The raised remains of Mary Rose have spent the three decades since being lifted from the Solent seabed being specially treated, allowing visitors to walk around the ship – rather than peer at her through glass.

A £35m hall and museum is being built around the ship which will allow the Mary Rose Trust to display three out of every five artefacts recovered from the wreck – far more than on display in the existing museum.

Prince Harry helped lay the foundation stone for the new building – which is due to open in the late summer of 2012.

The ceremony also witnessed a time capsule, with items suggested by pupils from Haslemere Preparatory School, buried in the floor of the new museum.

Picture: LA(Phot) Jenny Lodge, FRPU East

# Bomb surprise for HMS Tyne

THERE are things the Fishery Protection Squadron expects to find when carrying out a routine inspection of a trawler.

Fish usually. Some oversized. Some undersized. Most within the EU limits.

So imagine the surprise (and perhaps not a little consternation) when the boarding team of HMS Tyne climbed aboard the Belgian beam trawler Asannat in the Thames estuary and found a British WW2-era bomb rolling around the deck.

The Tyne sailors took photographs of the bomb and emailed them to the duty officer at Southern Diving Unit 2 on Horsea Island.

A quick inspection of those images showed that the bomb's explosive chain was intact – and that it remained a danger.

The River-class ship promptly escorted the Belgian to shallow waters off Ramsgate as Coastguard sought a suitable safe spot for the ordnance to be detonated away from shipping lanes and historic wrecks, while the SDU2 divers made godspeed from Portsmouth to Kent.

In thick fog, Tyne's sea boat picked them up from Ramsgate and ferried them to the trawler, where the bomb was carefully lowered on to the sea bed with a detonation charge attached.

Once the Asannat had retreated a safe distance, the bomb was blown up – with such force that the blast was strongly felt aboard Tyne some 1½ miles away.



● Maritime Lynx of 702 and 815 NAS and their Jungly counterpart from 847 NAS practise their display for the upcoming Yeovilton Air Day

Picture: LA(Phot) Gary Weatherston, RNAS Yeovilton

# Historic Lynx links

**FORTY years of Britain's fastest and most nimble helicopter will be celebrated this summer in the showpiece public event at the home of the Lynx.**

The 2011 Yeovilton Air Day will be a celebration of the long-serving helicopter, with navies from around the world sending their Lynx to Somerset to take part in an international fly past.

The Lynx – in service with three Fleet Air Arm squadrons all based at Yeovilton – is one of the most successful British exports over the past four decades: more than 200 of the versatile helicopters are operating with 11 navies.

In the Royal Navy's case, the helicopter's the backbone of operations by frigates and destroyers in the form of the Mk8, while the Commando Helicopter Force flies the reconnaissance model over land and sea.

The prototype Lynx flew for the first time in March 1971 (followed three years later by the first naval variant) and is being marked by a number of birthday events at Yeovilton.

Chief among those is the restoration of 'genesis' in the RN Lynx world: XX910 which, depending on the source you use, is the first – or second – maritime Lynx.

For the past decade the prototype has been looked after by the Helicopter Museum in Weston-super-Mare.

They snapped up the prototype when it was no longer needed by the test pilots and evaluators at Boscombe Down.

They picked up an aircraft which had been rather neglected – for a start XX910 was missing its tail boom.

In the years since, the enthusiasts have collected spare parts, but they've not had the time to piece the aircraft back together.

So enter engineers from the Lynx Helicopter Force Operational Support Team who'll spend the next five months rebuilding the aircraft's back end in time for the air station's annual showpiece, air day, on July 9.

WO David Lloyd, who's overseeing the restoration project, said many personnel at Yeovilton – home of the RN's Lynx force – had shown an interest in helping, not least to see how the helicopter has evolved since the early 70s.

"To get a chance to see what the Lynx has evolved from is quite fantastic," he added.

XX910 never entered operational service – the prototype was mainly used for testing sensors and avionics, plus Sea Skua missiles. It also made frequent appearances at air shows in the mid-70s, where test pilots performed the Lynx's party piece: the loop.

After air day, the restored XX910 will be returned to Weston-super-Mare.

The latest variant of the long-serving helicopter – a prototype of Lynx Wildcat, due in service with the Fleet Air Arm by 2015 – will be attending the July 9 air show.

The day will end with the trademark commando assault – big pyrotechnics, lots of helicopters, plenty of Royal Marines running around with guns shouting, shooting and ham-acting.

Tickets go on sale from April 1. Prices (in advance) are £18 (adults), £16 (senior citizens), £5 (children), £16 (veterans/serving personnel) or (on the day) £23 (adults/senior citizens/veterans/serving personnel), £8 (children). Visit <http://is.gd/5PABoY> for details (we've shortened the hideously-long RN website address for you).

Yeovilton's also holding a Lynx 40th anniversary cocktail party on Friday May 20 with a cocktail party to mark the helicopter's distinguished service – and also the 25th anniversary of the Lynx smashing the world speed record.

Pilot Trevor Egginton reached 249mph in a modified version of the demonstrator model, G-Lynx, in skies above Somerset in August 1986.

Commander Lynx Helicopter Force, Cdr Richard Ryan, is hosting the event at the Yeovilton wardroom. Rig is mess undress/black tie and bring your own picnic. Details from Lt Jayne Green on 01935 456978 or [lhf-702.nas-avwo@mod.uk](mailto:lhf-702.nas-avwo@mod.uk)

■ IFYOU live a little further west and fancy some hot WAFU action, then Culdrose on Wednesday July 20 would be a good place to start.

Firm details of the Cornish air station's annual air day are still being arranged.

But the date is fixed (it's held on a Wednesday because Saturday is traditionally a 'swap-over' day in Cornwall for tourists heading to and from England's westernmost county) and in addition to all the Seahawk-based Merlin and Sea

King squadrons on display, the RAF's two big crowdpleasers – Battle of Britain Flight and Red Arrows – will be performing.

More details will be available at the official website, [culdroseairday.co.uk](http://culdroseairday.co.uk).

# Bye bye Bayleaf

AFTER 29 years' service, veteran tanker Bayleaf has sailed for the final time under the Blue Ensign.

Much of that service has been spent supporting RN and Allied naval operations in the Gulf (including an unprecedented 12 years as the Armilla Patrol/Arabian Gulf Ready tanker and eight years continuously east of Suez) – and it is from that volatile region that the ship has returned from her last tour of duty.

Her final spell in the Gulf proved to be a relatively short one – under two years. Operating out of Bahrain and Dubai principally for six weeks at a time, she was required to be at 60 minutes' notice to provide fuel for Allied/Coalition warships in the Gulf or Indian Ocean by day or night.

Bayleaf is being withdrawn under last autumn's defence review; a smaller fleet of warships, sadly, means a smaller fleet of support vessels.

She joined the RFA family in 1982 and was immediately despatched to the South Atlantic to support the liberation of the Falklands (earning a battle honour for her part in Operation Corporate).

Since that inaugural mission, the tanker has sailed 1.4 million miles (that's the equivalent of 47 times around the earth) and carried out in excess of 5,000 replenishments.

After a brief visit to Portland, she entered Devonport on March 26 to begin the process of decommissioning.

The RFA standard will be hauled down for the last time on April 20 when there will be a ceremony to commemorate all she and her crew have achieved since 1982.

Bayleaf's passing leaves a solitary Leaf-class tanker in service with the RFA, Orangeleaf.

# 114ft up on F99

MADE it Ma! Top of the world.

Top of HMS Cornwall to be precise. Which is almost as high as the top of the world. Well, 35 metres up.

Two members of the frigate's ship's company prepare to carry out maintenance on the radar atop the main mast – the highest point on the Type 22 frigate – in Port Rashid, Dubai.

The Fighting 99 was taking a two-week break from keeping pirates under the knout with some much-needed TLC for the ship and some much-needed down time for the ship's company.

Before leave could begin in earnest there were a few tasks to complete:

- connect up the water and electricity supplies
- sort out 150 sacks of mail
- get rid of one month's worth of gash (which must have been a fun job in the heat...)
- store four lorry-loads of food waiting for the ship
- pass the fitness test (for those needing to stay 'in date')
- maintenance on that radar.

The warship found herself berthed next to legendary liner QE2 whose fate, two years after arriving in Dubai, remains uncertain, although the ex-Cunarder is still maintained in full working order by a skeleton crew.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins, FRPU East





# Destruction and deliverance

**1900 Hours, Saturday March 19 2011.**

*Somewhere in the Mediterranean.*

A white flash momentarily obscures the view through the periscope of HMS Triumph, while the surface of the Middle Sea bubbles.

The first strike by Britain against government forces in Libya came from the T-boat as she launched Tomahawk cruise missiles at Colonel Gaddafi's air defences.

In the Gulf of Sirte, Her Majesty's Ships Cumberland and Westminster – their crews closed up in defence watches wearing anti-flash, the upper deck guns manned – kept the waters free of Libyan gunboats as Operation Ellamy, Britain's contribution to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, sought to paralyse Gaddafi's war machine.

The cruise missile launches from Triumph – in a rare move, Premier David Cameron publicly highlighted the submarine's involvement – heralded the first night of strikes by RAF Tornado bombers against Libyan air defences.

The pinpoint accuracy of the T-boat's Tomahawks – which can hit targets up to 1,000 miles away from the submarine, delivering a 1,000lb warhead – were called

upon in the second night of bombardment.

Although most of the media attention has been focused on the aerial involvement in the campaign, senior Whitehall officers stressed the importance of the Senior Service's role in Operation Ellamy – still in its earliest stages as Navy News went to press.

Capt Karl Evans, a former T-boat commander and now operations officer on the Naval Staff, said the RN's blockade of Libya had kept Colonel Gaddafi's gunboats holed up in port.

Since frigates Westminster and Cumberland began enforcing the United Nations Resolution with other Allied naval forces, Capt Evans said the dictator's ships had shown "a very marked reluctance" to leave their bases.

Until the UN Resolution was enforced, Gaddafi's ships had been used to bombard targets in rebel-held locations ashore.

"We had seen Libyan surface ships used to shell shore positions. That's now stopped. Our ships and their capabilities may well be a factor in why that's stopped," said Capt Evans.

As well as ensuring arms do not slip through the naval cordon drawn across the Gulf of Sirte, both ships have been using their surveillance suites to keep tabs

on activities along the Libyan coast, providing vital intelligence for the overall mission.

Westminster's Commanding Officer Cdr Tim Green said his ship had been heavily involved both in the humanitarian evacuation operation in eastern Libya (more on that later) and in monitoring "activities on the ground and in the air".

Just days before patrolling the Gulf of Sirte, the Type 23 was enjoying the sights of London.

"We went straight from a home town visit in the capital into a conflict zone, ready for action," Cdr Green added.

"My ship's company have been magnificent and I am proud of each and every one of them.

"We will be here simply as long as is necessary – the situation is dynamic and evolving, but we are prepared to stay in this area as long as required."

Ellamy was just four days old when we went to press and Maj Gen John Lorimer, the Chief of Defence Staff's spokesman, said the precise results of the campaign against Gaddafi's forces were still being analysed.

But he said there was no doubt that the international effort had spared Benghazi – the kernel of resistance against the Libyan dictator's regime – from a savage occupation.

"Regime troops were on the outskirts of Benghazi. Col Gaddafi vowed that his men would be going from house to house, room to room, to burn out the opposition. The military intervention to enforce the UN Resolution has stopped that attack in its tracks," Maj Gen Lorimer added.

**BEFORE the paralysing Effects of Ellamy there was the deliverance of Deference.**

Fiasco. Bungling. Slow. Disorganised.

If you were to read the newspapers or watch the television, the rescue mission to save hundreds of Britons stuck in Libya as the country descended into civil war was chaotic, ill-planned, sluggish.

Britons were in peril... and were being let down by their compatriots.

There is another, very different story of Operation Deference – the British evacuation mission from Libya, the latest state to be caught up by the wave of revolution sweeping through Arab states.

It is a story of improvisation. Self-sacrifice. Care. Concern. Devotion. Commitment.

Allow us to tell that story.

As she passed through the Suez Canal, HMS Cumberland had at least one eye on home.

Her patrol keeping pirates in check in the Indian Ocean was done. After six months away, it was time to plan the ship's final entry to Plymouth as she paid off after more than 20 years' service under the White Ensign.

The same day that the Type 22 frigate exited Egypt's great man-made waterway, unrest in Libya reached the streets of the capital after five days of protest.

Eastern Libya was ablaze, the country's second city of Benghazi contested by pro and anti-government forces. Protestors in Benghazi numbered several thousand, the dead several hundred.

The Fighting Sausage was ordered to make haste for Crete. Operation Deference was in effect.

In Souda Bay the frigate found fuel, emergency supplies – blankets, nappies, baby milk, toothbrushes, toothpaste, sea sickness tablets (the latter would be much in demand...) – numerous extra personnel – more commandos from Fleet Protection Group, a Foreign Office 'rapid deployment team', staff from Permanent Joint Headquarters – and 1½ tonnes of potatoes (among other

additional foodstuffs).

In Brega, 125 miles south of Benghazi, Britons working on the 'Great Man-Made River Project' – intended to supply the people of the port with water – watched events spiral out of control.

"The threat was getting too real to be ignored – it's a real shame because the Libyan people are incredibly generous and accommodating," said 58-year-old Inverness engineer Allan Lamont.

"In the past few weeks we'd seen a real rising in violence – we had to fight off looters and, in general, expect the worst."

After ten days of growing unrest and increasing lawlessness, contracts manager Richard Weeks from Sully, near Cardiff, decided it was no longer safe to remain in Libya.

"There was no prospect of it easing. We were faced with looters rushing into the property where we were holed up," he said.

"They were armed with knives and knew that they could take what they wanted. It was a very sad and terrifying situation."

The Britons decided to leave Brega, but they did so reluctantly.

Continued on page 24







● (l-r) Cumberland's sailors register evacuees in a shed in Benghazi; PO Paul Ashwin hands a bar of chocolate to a youngster; another child is helped ashore in Maltaby LS Mamie Battersby; a relieved father helps his children down the gangway after Cumberland's second run into Benghazi; Royal Marines of FPGRM watch as HMS York arrives in the Libyan port; and the Union Flag flies briefly over the docks during the destroyer's short stay

● HMS Westminster's Merlin returns to mother after a surveillance patrol of the Gulf of Sirte

Continued from page 23  
"It's a really important programme for the people – it's a real shame that we had to come out," said Falklands veteran Mike Wilson; he served with Cumberland's older sister HMS Broadsword in the South Atlantic in 1982.  
"It was a very dangerous situation which was escalating."  
They headed north for the port of Benghazi, Libya's second city.

In Benghazi, teachers Keith and Sue Rodgers from Settle in North Yorkshire had watched the growing unrest with unease. "It was very surreal because we could hear gunfire, but could still pop into the shops to get items," said Mrs Rodgers. "In the final few days, the situation really worsened. We knew we had to go."

Whitehall had come to similar conclusions. Britons in Libya were, said William Hague, "in a perilous and frightening situation". The moment had come, the Foreign Secretary determined, "to get the remaining British nationals in Libya out of harm's way". He urged British citizens to make for Benghazi.

Shortly after mid-day on Thursday February 24 HMS Cumberland arrived in Benghazi to begin a NEO – non-combatant evacuation operation, a task long-practised by British warships undergoing training with the Flag Officer Sea Training.

On the jetty Lt Will Benbow and PO 'Taff' Newell organised the ship's boarding team to help the green berets safeguarding the immediate area.

A cavernous shed in the docks served as the hub of the evacuation, where sailors and Foreign and Commonwealth officials processed the civilians before allowing them to board the frigate.

As they stepped on to the Fighting Sausage, the evacuees received nutty and water from PO(C) Paul Ashwin, while the ship's most senior senior rate, EWO Johnny Lambert, and CPO(UW) Dave Sibson ensured all the new arrivals settled down safely.

The ship's doctor Surg Lt Alex Shaw and PO(MA) Nick Ellery attended to each and every evacuee, providing them with seasickness tablets and offering medical screening. There were 207 additional souls aboard the frigate – 68 of them British citizens.

"The Navy was fantastic," enthused Allan Lamont. "The food, the attention to detail, everything was far more than you would expect when you're in such a difficult situation."

Fellow Scotsman Philip Douglas said that the sailors and marines had "gone beyond the call of duty. I cannot fault their performance in any way."

The first crossing to Malta proved to be an especially rough affair – Cumberland's arrival in Grand Harbour was delayed a good ten hours as storms battered the Med. Four evacuees were seriously ill, a fifth suffered a heart condition; all were cared for by the medical team before they were handed into the care of the Maltese when the frigate belatedly arrived.

"Many children were upset because of the stress of the evacuation while some of their parents were too sick or ill to look after their young children," said Cumberland's CO Capt Steve Dainton.

The ladies of 3P mess stepped in to care for the youngsters;

**140** British citizens saved

**497** souls rescued by Cumberland and York

**1 1/2** tonnes of medical aid delivered by HMS York

**54** commandos sent by FPGRM

**12** nationalities rescued by HMS York





LLogs(SC) Michelle King gave up her bunk for a pregnant evacuee. "It was heart-breaking to see what these people were going through. I wanted to do everything I could to help them," said the 29-year-old leading hand.

"We can say we're proud to have got so many hundreds of people out safely."

"It's daunting emotionally, but it's exciting too. A fortnight earlier we were fighting piracy off the coast of Somalia, then we were painting children's nails and delivering drinks."

As a storm-tossed Cumberland arrived in Valletta in the small hours of Saturday February 26, in Benghazi Tracey Awgali was wrestling with an agonising decision: to stay or to leave.

Her husband Saleh was a proud Libyan. Come what may he would stay in his native land. His British-born wife feared for the safety of the couple's nine-year-old daughter Farah.

"Libya has been my home for 14 years, but I didn't recognise it – there was gunfire every day," said Mrs Awgali. People were out on the streets with machetes. We were effectively trapped indoors and very scared."

Oil worker Marsden Sims missed Cumberland's first rescue mission and watched the growing revolt first on TV, then in the flesh.

"We were in one works compound about eight hours south of Benghazi. We saw looters outside taking vehicles and equipment."

"The Indians in the camp next to us were jumping the fence so they could get to safety."

The hour had come to make for Benghazi.

After driving around some of Benghazi's hotels where he suspected foreigners would stay, Saleh Awgali learned encouraging news: "a British ship was coming in again".

That ship was Cumberland once more. After offloading her human cargo in Malta, the frigate turned around and made for eastern Libya once more. This time there were 218 civilians waiting for the frigate – among them Marsden Sims and Tracey and Farah Awgali.

"You could feel how worried people had been and how glad they were to be getting out," said LET Dave Bridle.

"I'm humbled – and just pleased we managed to get so many people on their way home."

His shipmate CPO Dave Sibson added: "I'm really proud that we've been part of this effort – to come into Libya twice in three days is not something many people can say they've done, and especially not for this reason."

"I've served around the world with the Navy and thought I'd seen it all, but this shows even someone of my experience what can suddenly occur out of the blue."

With two Benghazi runs complete, Cumberland's place was taken momentarily by HMS York.

Britain's fastest destroyer (top speed 35+ kts) had been steadily making her way to the Falklands to relieve her sister Gloucester. Instead, she was diverted to the Mediterranean. After brief



pitstops in Gibraltar and Valletta, D98 found herself in international waters off Tripoli.

Her mission: to monitor air and maritime activity around the Libyan capital to assist Allied naval forces involved in the international rescue mission.

"York remained just outside territorial waters for some time – the lights of Tripoli could easily be seen," said her marine engineer officer Lt Cdr George Adams.

With the picture of goings on by air and sea built, the destroyer made for Augusta on the east coast of Sicily (Valletta was temporarily full of ferries involved in the evacuation) to refuel, then back to Malta to collect 1½ tonnes of medical donations from the Swedish Government, such as needles, syringes, surgical gloves and bandages for the city's medical centre; with Benghazi's airport out of action due to the fighting, York was the only way to deliver the aid.

Which she did.

After a 24-hour passage, York entered Benghazi harbour where the situation was, says Commanding Officer Cdr Simon Staley, "pretty quiet and calm" although there was sporadic shooting while the destroyer was berthed.

He added: "There was a definite sense of nerves in the people who were there to support us. The port and city were under immense pressure."

"Saying that they were euphoric and very proud. They had got a sniff of freedom now and appeared to like what they have smelled."

Three six-man teams of Royal Marines were sent ashore to secure the jetty – and should anything untoward occur, evacuate everyone shoreside in a flash and pull back to the Type 42.

To a soundtrack of distant explosions and gunfire, the green berets safeguarded the dockside.

Within an hour of York berthing the medical supplies were in lorries organised by Swedish officials ashore and on their way to the city's principal hospital – allowing the ship to begin the embarkation of civilians.

If not huddled masses, they were certainly tired and poor – some had abandoned all they had and, in the case of some of the oil workers, run a 250-mile gauntlet through the Western Desert.

"There were loads of people on the jetty," said SA Niall Tuttiatt.

"As they came over to us, some told us what they'd been through. There was one lady with four children saying goodbye to

family on the jetty which was quite emotional. They were all crying and hugging."

Among those on the quayside was oil engineer Steve Tindal from Swansea, one of a group of three oil workers escorted to the port by the self-styled Jalu People's Army as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office urged all Britons still in Libya to make for Benghazi.

After a hair-raising journey to the port – the desert oil field where the engineers had been working was "subsequently overrun with heavy casualties" – the sight of HMS York and her sailors and Royal Marines was "a massive relief," said Mr Tindal.

He added: "The immediate feeling of security they provided for us was utterly mind-blowing and made me proud to be British."

His sentiments were echoed by Emlyn Hill, who'd spent the past four years teaching English to oil workers.

"We are all so grateful to the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines. It was such a relief to see them from where we were on the jetty," he said.

"As soon as I saw the uniforms and heard the accents I knew I would be going home."

No evacuee could set foot on HMS York without being searched – just in case any weapons were smuggled aboard (they weren't).

"It is a difficult job – you feel quite awkward when you know what they have been through, but it's something we had to do to ensure everyone's safety," said AB Laura Davies, asked to search women and girls coming aboard (four male shipmates dealt with male evacuees).

Eleven Britons and 32 citizens of 11 nations as distant as Poland and the Philippines filed aboard York, each with a harrowing story to tell of their escape from a country descending into civil war.

Many were greeted at the top of the gangway by York's Commanding Officer Cdr Simon Staley. "Some of these people – from the old to the very young – had been through some horrific experiences and had travelled some extreme distances to board HMS York to get away from Libya," he said.

"They were very brave people to leave friends and their beloved country behind."

D98 was alongside in Benghazi barely four hours before making for Malta.

"As lines were slipped, the Libyan Navy personnel lined the jetty and saluted as HMS York sailed out and, with two Rolls-Royce Olympus engines driving

her at full speed, made a rapid exit from Libyan waters," said Lt Cdr Adams.

In the galley the chefs prepared 130 additional meals for the evacuees – cooked breakfasts went down especially well with the Britons – many sailors gave up their bunks for the night crossing... and the NAAFI did a roaring trade in HMS York Zippo lighters.

"The civilians were all really relieved," said Cpl Aaron Laycock RM. "Libya is not a nice place for them to be at the moment."

AB Davies added: "People kept coming up and saying: 'Thank you, you've done a good job.' It's nice to know that we've helped them out."

As York returned to Malta, so Cumberland returned to Benghazi for the third (and, so far, final) time.

There were just 29 civilians (including ten Brits) to collect on this third trip.

"I am very proud of the way the entire ship's company reacted to this challenge," Capt Dainton told his men and women.

"It has been hard work, but thank you for your superb performance, well done."

There was praise too from the Secretary of State for Defence, visiting Malta to thank the Fighting Sausage's men and women for their efforts.

The minister spent some time aboard the Type 22 chatting with the ship's company before taking the salute from Cumberland's Guard Commander at a ceremonial sunset.

Dr Fox was in Malta to thank the country for its crucial support throughout Operation Delfin – the island served as the hub for the military and civilian evacuation operation not just for Britain, but for numerous nations.

And that evacuation mission was still not over.

Thirteen hundred miles away, HMS Westminster was enjoying a visit to London – a first visit to the Thames in some time and a welcome chance to catch up with affiliates.

Berthed at Canary Wharf, the frigate had done all the usual things when it comes to a warship visiting the capital: hosting VIPs and affiliates, paying the Dues to the Constable of the Tower of London – upholding an age-old tradition when the fortress offered protection to warships on the Thames – and the odd rig run, including 20 members of the frigate's crew lining the players' entrance at Twickenham for the England-France Six Nations rugby clash.

Central to Westminster's visit was a 'capability demonstration' to show MPs, government officials, senior civil servants, academics and journalists about the versatility of the RN, its people and its kit.

And barely had the guests left than the Type 23 cut short her visit to the capital and sailed for the Mediterranean at best speed to join the Delfin mission.

The sailors adapted to the change of circumstances, said CO Cdr Tim Green, "with the minimum of fuss."

"This is what the RN does and my ship and people stepped up to the mark."

There was no mercy mission for Westminster to perform, rather two weeks of patrolling in international waters off the Libyan coast, monitoring events and waiting for orders to act.

On Friday March 18, those orders to act came.



● York's CO Cdr Simon Staley and AB Laura Davies assist a mother and her child aboard the destroyer and (below) in Malta AB Davies carries a young girl ashore





# Legendary Lionel's myth-Buster

LIEUTENANT Commander Lionel Kenneth Philip Crabb (pictured below) was never called 'Buster'.

Most called him Crabbie but if one knew him really well he was Philip, or Phil.

The paper trail of *Buster Crabbie* (as I misspelt his name in the feature about diving in *March* – sorry, Ed) takes us to Clarence Lindon Crabbie, born in 1907, died 1983.

He was an Olympic Champion Freestyle – Bronze in 1928 and Gold in 1932.

He was good-looking, fit as a butcher's dog, and had a muscular body like Tarzan.

He made many movies, was the first Flash Gordon and had a long run playing Buck Rogers, the comic-strip hero.

His movies are still available and they will keep young grandchildren amused.

Now, dealing with unexploded ordnance did not give me a high before or during the operation, and it was only after serious discussion and identification procedures that we went ahead.

We had no wire communications under water in those far-off days, only a slate and crayon.

It was always after the debriefing and making up the log and pictures that the team could unwind, and Crabbie would often be at the forefront of these jollifications, for he had a good singing voice and knew lots of ballads.

The Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, spoke about the land Crabbie loved and served so well and the Russians laid a button-shaped wreath full of white alpine-type small flowers.

May he rest in peace.

– Gerald Morris, Diver 338L, Waverton, Chester

...I met Cdr Crabb aboard HMS Saumarez in Haifa Harbour during the Palestine troubles.

He came aboard to advise us on how to deal with limpet mines which might be planted by terrorist frogmen in harbour, especially at night.

We had a patrol, armed with sub-machine guns, with orders to guard against any small boat coming too near. Sometimes we dropped small charges as well, as a deterrent.

I can actually see Cdr Crabb's face now if I shut my eyes – I remember his hairy cheeks, dark hair and his darkish face.

It's a long time ago, I'm now 90 and survived the treacherous mining of Saumarez and Volage in the Corfu Channel.

– Thomas Russell, High Green, Sheffield

## Full metal Jacky

EACH time I read through *Navy News*, on reaching Drafty's Corner my mind drifts back to 1965 when I worked in Fleet Air Arm drafting, then in Daedalus.

We had a framed copy of a handwritten reply Admiral Jacky Fisher (instigator of the Dreadnought Battleships and at the time CinC West Indies Fleet – and pictured right) gave in the early 1900s to one of his captains.

The relief for the ship's CPO writer was due to arrive after his predecessor had left for the UK. The captain had requested a delay so that a handover could be undertaken.

Admiral Fisher's response was an emphatic 'no' – he asked what would have happened if the CPO writer had died?

So if you are going to sue for a fuller complement, plough on don't ask Adm Fisher!



So a slight difference in drafting attitudes ancient and modern?

I wonder what happened to the copy when FAA Drafting moved to HMS Centurion?

– C H Lawson, Fareham, Hants

**JACKPOT!**



Each month Pussers Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter – provided he or she is over 18, of course. For youngsters and teetotalers we will provide an alternative prize.



● HMS Ark Royal's ship's company celebrate the Freedom of the City of Leeds for the final time

Picture: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan, FRPU North

## Ark ends up in museum

I WRITE to point out an error in *Navy News's* reporting of the Ark Royal's parade in Leeds (March)

You reported that the Lord Mayor took the salute outside the Town Hall.

This never happened. You were probably misinformed, like the local visitors' centre, newspapers, local radio and TV.

As a result, crowds assembled outside the Town Hall, including myself, police and a local TV cameraman.

We all saw the parade turn right, about 200 yards

away, and return to the City Museum where the Lord Mayor took the salute.

The above added a touch of humour when the TV cameraman quickly folded his tripod and started to chase the parade for a photo.

Fortunately, as an ex-Navy man and subscriber to your paper I was fit enough to scuttle the 200 yards to see the end of the parade.

My protests to the Publicity Department of Leeds City Council have produced a nil reply. You try!

– Robert Owen, Huddersfield

## (Cumber)land of hope

HMS CUMBERLAND, albeit now in her 21st year, is still a proud asset of the world's best-trained navy.

She entered Grand Harbour in Malta on Saturday 26 February at 0100 GMT and left again a few hours later after safely discharging ashore around 250 Britons and others from different nationalities.

Later she returned to Malta having rescued another batch of 250 evacuees from Libya of which only 50 were Britons and the rest from other nationalities.

What would the world do without an ocean-going Royal Navy? She who has kept the world safe for so long!

Taxes are sometimes squandered on frivolous things but investments in fighting ships are paramount since when the country goes to war or is faced with conflict it is to their fighting sons and daughters that the people look for survival.

– James Davis, Malta

AM I right in thinking there is a strange coincidence here?

1958 – trouble in Libya, British citizens rescued by HMS Cumberland, the ship due to be decommissioned months later and subsequently scrapped?

2011 – British citizens in trouble in Libya, British citizens rescued by HMS Cumberland, the ship due to be decommissioned months later and subsequently scrapped?

– Patrick Collins, Beaulieu, Hants

The coincidence would be neat, but the events don't exactly compare.



● CPO(EW) Kavanagh helps carry a five-month-old baby ashore in Malta after Cumberland's evacuation from Benghazi

Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen

The Naval Historical Branch told *Navy News*: "There was similar turmoil in the Middle East in 1958, as a result of the knock-on effect of the Anglo-French attack on Egypt (Suez) in 1956. The Admiralty were making preparations for the evacuation of King Idris of Libya and his family in the event of a coup d'etat.

The trials cruiser HMS Cumberland was paying a visit to Genoa at the time (July 1958) and was instructed to sail as soon as possible to Gibraltar to embark

the 1st Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment and transfer them to Tobruk.

Once there, the Royal Sussex relieved 45 Cdo; and 3 Cdo Brigade Headquarters, with stores and vehicles, were in turn embarked and taken to Malta, the equipment and vehicles being carried on to Cyprus.

Cumberland was released to her trials programme on August 3. She returned to Plymouth in December for scrapping, having been launched in 1928." – Ed

## Lines to take

I WRITE in response to David Tolson's letter (February) about Navy-related trains.

For example, there was a railway in the Falklands Islands during World War 1.

"A 2ft gauge line was built in 1915 to help in the construction of the Admiralty wireless station. It ran along the north side of Stanley harbour from the Camber depot at Navy Point for three miles to the new transmitters at Moody Brook."

More can be found at this little gem of a site: [railwaysofthefarsouth.co.uk/11acamberrailway.html](http://railwaysofthefarsouth.co.uk/11acamberrailway.html)

– Andrew McGeechan, Coventry

WITH reference to the Editor's comments on David Tolson's letter (February) the funeral train went from Waterloo to Long Hanborough and not Hanborough.

From the station the cortege went to the nearby village of Bladon and he was buried in the churchyard of St Martin's Church.

From his grave you can see Blenheim, which was what he wanted.

– Mike Pearce

The Friends of the National Railway Museum are launching an appeal for funds to restore the Winston Churchill engine – email [nrm.friends@nrm.org.uk](mailto:nrm.friends@nrm.org.uk) for details – Ed

## Team's long-term learning

WITH reference to *The Grove Review* (March), Professor Grove might like to know that the Special Entry term (SE 52) that joined RNC Dartmouth in August 1940, of which Cadet Ince and I were both members, only did one, admittedly long, term to December 1940 and were all away to their first ships as Midshipmen in January 1941.

It is curious that in the light of the increased numbers taken in during earlier years, we were also a very small term.

Only 15 executive cadets plus some direct entries from Pangbourne, and a similar number of Engineers, plus some Paymasters.

However, we were joined by a large group of Canadians, some cadets for the Indian, Australian and South African navies, and also some Free French, making a total of about 75 cadets.

– Cdr G H Greenish, Robertsbridge, East Sussex

## Eagle's wings

REGARDING Hadrian Jeff's letter *Illustrious VC* (February), as a former Eagle man, I can only say it's time Eagle had her recognition.

Eagle had had a rough time being bombed and could not take part in the raid on Taranto in 1940 because she was in Alexandria being repaired.

But quite a proportion of 813 and 824 Squadrons, who belonged to Eagle, were transferred to *Illustrious* – aircraft and aircrew.

I was 20 at the time, I am now 90.

– Eddy Sherwin, Kirkby Stephen, Westmorland

## opinion

HMS Protector, the Antarctic survey ship of the 1950s and 1960s, was a much-loved and hard-working ship who spent no fewer than 13 seasons in the frozen continent after her first deployment there in 1955.

So the news that her name will live on with the Royal Navy's new Antarctic survey ship is very welcome.

The new Protector, a Norwegian icebreaker currently called Polarbjorn – Polar Bear – will be leased on a three-year contract while the future of HMS Endurance, who was badly damaged by a flooding accident in 2008, is reviewed.

The mission of the Antarctic patrol ship is fascinating and unique among RN deployments.

She supports the British Antarctic Survey, monitors wildlife, updates the charts and upholds the Antarctic Treaties.

She also maintains the UK's presence in the South Atlantic and provides reassurance and support to the Falkland Islands.

The region is now a popular tourist destination for upmarket cruises, but it is still remote and dangerous. Even the legendary explorers Edmund Hillary and Vivian Fuchs were offered help – by HMS Protector of course – when their ship became stuck in pack-ice in the Weddell Sea in 1956.

The new HMS Protector doubtless has some exciting deployments in store. Let's hope she is as happy and hard-working as her namesake predecessor, and celebrate the fact that the Antarctic patrol is rightly seen as a vital part of the Navy's work.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

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CLASSIC  
**JACK**

BY TUGS



## Farewell, Manchester – and we thank you

MY COLLEAGUE Jan Thomas, secretary of the Bolton RNA branch, and I travelled to Portsmouth for the decommissioning of HMS Manchester, and boy, were we made to feel welcome.

We were victualled in the Senior Rates' mess in HMS Nelson, where everyone was friendly and helpful.

After the ceremony and march-off of the very smart guard and Royal Marines Band, we adjourned to a marquee, where Cdr Cox (pictured above by LA(Phot) Kyle Heller taking the salute at the destroyer's decommissioning ceremony) presented various affiliations and charities with gifts.

We were then invited (kicking and screaming...) to the POs' Mess on board Manchester, where again the hospitality was second to none.

Jan and I left the ship and were walking through the dockyard when we fell into conversation with the Naval Base Commander, Cdre Rob Thompson.

On hearing about my sciatica when I stopped for a rest, the Commodore insisted on giving us a lift back to the mess in his car.

In the evening we went to the ship's ball at Boathouse 7, where again nothing was too much trouble and there was a wonderful buffet and a piece of decommissioning cake which I sampled on my way out. My bed was most welcoming that night!

I cannot thank anyone enough for making it a memorable occasion for the two of us who had travelled from Bolton.

– Mick Hudson, Turton, Bolton, Lancs

## Shiny Sheff... brawny Sheff



HOW times have changed!

HMS Bulwark had to weigh anchor by hand (*Call in the chain gang, March*) and they were all flummoxed, never having done it before.

On HMS Sheffield's (C24) last commission, 1957-59 it was quite a common evolution.

Even us engine-room crew used to go up and have a go, a bit of fun and fresh air!

The photo from the commissioning book (pictured left) shows it in progress with LME Huntley in the centre of the capstan playing sea shanties on his accordion.

That is me on the extreme right looking across as a 20-year-old. It seems a long while ago – it is!

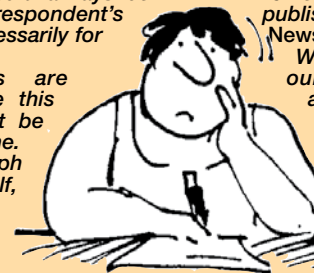
Happy days.

– Patrick Hughes, M(E) LM(E), Shotley, Ipswich

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E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.



Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

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We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



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## Wheels across the world

'JOIN the Navy, see the world', according to a venerable old recruitment slogan.

In Lt Cdr Ken Roberts' case it was 'leave the Navy, see the world'.

Having retired after more than 20 years as a weapon engineer in the Royal Navy, the officer (*above*) decided to cycle around the world.

And since leaving Somerset in September 2009 he has covered more than 9,000 miles.

He headed across Europe to Central Asia, then pushed on into China and Hong Kong.

From the arid plains of eastern Kazakhstan, through the mountains of western China and into the Gobi Desert, Ken has had to contend with treacherous roads, temperatures in the forties and unrelenting gale-force winds.

Throw in corruption, detention by border guards and the odd unsavoury illness and it was quite an opening leg for his grand tour.

His arrival in Australia was also marked by difficult conditions, including the Queensland floods.

Coming up is a passage across the Pacific to North America, down through South America and then by ship to Cape Town, from where he plans to cycle through Africa and the Iberian peninsula to France and home.

The whole trip should take around four years and cover 45,000 miles, and is raising funds for the Outward Bound Trust.

Ken keeps his family and friends up-to-date through his blog, photos and video clips, all accessible via [www.acrosscontinents.org](http://www.acrosscontinents.org)

## Lyon crushed Jaguar

A SENIOR rate set aside the cares of a front-line deployment for a few minutes when his 25 years of service were recognised at a ceremony in Helmand.

PO Grant 'Lennie' Lyon, is currently serving with 846 Naval Air Squadron at Camp Bastion.

And his squadron colleagues lined up to watch as Lennie was presented with a wine cooler and certificate recognising his service.

The presentation was made by Admiral Tony Johnston-Burt, Officer Commanding Joint Helicopter Force.

Before moving to the Sea King Mk4s of 846 NAS – the Junglies – Lennie worked on the Sea Harrier's weapons systems, seeing service in the Adriatic and Gulf as well as taking part in exercises in the Med and the USA.

On joining 846 NAS Lennie immediately deployed to Bosnia, and went on to serve in Iraq.

Whilst Lennie has had a successful career, he admitted that not everything has gone to plan.

Whilst working in the hangar of HMS Illustrious he managed to drop a bomb carrier from height onto the roof of the Captain's new Jaguar staff car, writing it off...

The senior rate's wine cooler is not your standard off-the-shelf job – the surprise gift was crafted from a decommissioned 105mm light gun brass cartridge case.

# James fixed people instead of engines

A SAILOR who switched from stoker to medic on joining the Royal Navy has called it a day after 23 years.

MA James Furphy, aged 39, had enjoyed a stint as a stoker in the Sea cadets in the 1980s.

But during his initial visit to the careers office in Bletchley in 1988 a CPO told him that the Royal Navy wanted more medics, so that is the path James followed.

"It was just like being a stoker except I'd fix people instead of engines and I never looked back," he said.

The medical assistant has seen

service in Iraq (Operation Safe Haven), Poland, Dubai, Gibraltar, India and Germany.

Of his time in the Navy James said: "I have seen and done many things during my career that the average person will never have the opportunity to complete."

"It is of great pride to me that my stepson Daniel Bartlett has also joined the Royal Navy and is presently serving onboard HMS York."

Originally from Stratford, James now lives in Portsmouth with his wife Kim and step-children Daniel and Ian Bartlett.



● Cdre Tim Lowe, Commodore Maritime Warfare School, presents a valedictory certificate to MA James Furphy, watched by James's wife Kim and stepson Daniel Bartlett



## Uncle shows the way

A YOUNG sailor has followed in his uncle's footsteps by qualifying as a submariner on the same vessel in which his relative serves.

AB Sam Hanslip, aged 19 (*above*), joined the Submarine Service after completing his basic qualification during an intensive six-month period onboard Devonport-based HMS Triumph.

During his studies the submarine was carrying out sea trials and undergoing operational sea training, resulting in a busy time for Sam – including starring in a TV documentary.

His final course assessments coincided with the submarine staging the course to choose elite future submarine commanders – the infamous 'Perisher', so-called because of its demanding and highly-selective nature.

So while the documentary film crew covered the Perisher, they also turned the lens on Sam during his own course final test.

Sam's uncle, PO Karl Lott, aged 34, joined the Royal Navy in 1997 and took every chance to show Sam what life was like in the Royal Navy, fuelling his eventual desire to join the Senior Service.

Karl said: "Little Sam has done a blinding job and I'm very proud of him."

Sam said: "Despite all the very hard work, it's been a lot of fun getting qualified onboard HMS Triumph."

"The lads have been great and we're a pretty tightly knit team in the submarine's sound room – thanks in part to Uncle Karl."

PO Lott joined up in 1997, qualifying as a submariner in 1998 in HMS Trenchant.

## Painted tribute

AN ARTIST is planning to create a painting to pay tribute to sailors who died almost 70 years ago.

David Folland has been researching the history of German battleship Bismarck and Britain's iconic HMS Hood, sunk within days of each other in May 1941.

David's painting of the Bismarck, in the Denmark Strait, and Hood in her prime in Vancouver Harbour will be recorded online daily, from blank canvas to finished items – a blog he hopes to have up and running by the end of this month.

The blog will be interactive, allowing people to add their thoughts and feelings as they see the painting taking shape.

For more details see [www.wall-smacker-art.com](http://www.wall-smacker-art.com)

# 'Radar Boy' meets modern compeers

DIVERS at Clyde Naval Base hosted a special visitor when a bomb-disposal expert from the Korean War paid a call.

The Faslane-based Northern Diving Group (NDG) were joined by veteran Harry McLean, aged 77, who lives near the base at Dumbarton.

Harry (*right*) worked as a Royal Navy clearance diver in the 1950s, and during the Korean conflict the 17-year-old sailor was honoured with a mention in dispatches after saving destroyer HMS Charity from straying into an enemy minefield.

"It's interesting to come back and see how they do things now," said Harry.

"The equipment they use is a lot different from what I used, and the training is a lot more extensive too."

"I know that the lads here have been out to the Gulf and Afghanistan disposing of bombs."

"They deserve all the recognition they can get."

"To me they are heroes."

Harry, who was dubbed by the *London Gazette* as the "extraordinary radar boy" for his uncanny ability to sniff out mines, was accompanied by his wife Marion during the tour.

Members of the diving group, including Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Kevin Stockton and CPO Willie Sharp, gave them a presentation on the jobs the modern day clearance diver undertakes, including disposing of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), wartime ordnance and performing underwater engineering tasks to submarines at Faslane.

"You never know what each day will bring in this job," said Lt Cdr Stockton.

"I suppose that's the main

attraction, the unpredictability."

"Royal Navy clearance divers come from all backgrounds, but when you speak with them you begin to see one particular trait – a low threshold for boredom."

"Even going back to when I was studying at school I knew that I wasn't cut out for a normal nine-to-five job."

"There was no way I could have done it; I always wanted that element of challenge."

A job with the Northern Diving Group certainly offers plenty of challenge.

The divers are available at a moment's notice every day of the year, not only to dispose of the hundreds of wartime ordnance washed up on beaches, but to tackle improvised explosive devices in the Glasgow and Edinburgh areas.

Lt John Keenan of the Canadian Navy is second-in-command of the Group, serving with the Royal Navy as part of a regular exchange scheme.

As an expert in disposing of improvised bombs he is well aware of just how hazardous they can be.

"All bombs, whether they are mass-produced or home-made, have common elements," he said.

"They all have a charge, a power element and an explosive element."

"With mass-produced bombs and wartime ordnance we have a good idea of what to expect, but improvised devices are different."

"What it basically comes down to is you against the mind of the person who built it."

"During a call-out safety is always our main priority."

"We talk to witnesses at the scene and get an idea of what we're dealing with and we always operate a policy of 'one man risk'."

"One person will approach the bomb and do a bit of investigating;



● Harry McLean (back row, left) with the rest of the Scotland Command Bomb and Mine Disposal team in the 1950s

until they decide that it is safe no-one else is allowed near it."

The group's bomb disposal experts have a range of equipment at their disposal when tackling the devices they encounter.

Apart from the protective bomb suits – familiar to anyone who has seen *The Hurt Locker* – the team also use the Mk 8 Wheelbarrow, a remotely-controlled bomb-disposal robot.

"What can sometimes prove the biggest challenge is the environment," said Lt Keenan.

"In certain situations all the equipment in the world won't help and it just comes down to the bomb disposal experts themselves."

"That's when your training as a

clearance diver comes to the fore."

"If you can dispose of a mine 200ft below the ocean in the pitch dark, cocooned by freezing water and buffeted by tidal currents, then disposing of a bomb on dry land becomes that little bit easier."

Lt Cdr Stockton continued: "The thing that changes in the diving branch is not the personalities, because it takes a certain kind of person to do that work."

"What changes is the equipment and technology."

"Harry McLean is part of a long and proud tradition and we were delighted to welcome him to Northern Diving Group."



● Ross Watton, with his painting of Ark Royal, in the carrier's wardroom

# Ark Royal captured in oil

BEHIND the detailed 'cutaway' pictures of ships and aircraft which are a popular feature of *Navy News* are hours of painstaking work.

Producing each one is quite a feat, not least because the original ship's plans have to be tracked down before the artistic work can even begin.

For several years the *Navy News* cutaways have been produced by Ross Watton.

Working from his home in Wales, Ross spends months producing each one – the Queen Elizabeth carrier which appeared in July 2010 took over six months from start to finish.

Ross is also an accomplished oil painter, and following his QE cutaway, was officially commissioned to produce an oil painting of the new carrier with Ark Royal in the background.

However, halfway through the commission came the Defence Review and the news that the new carrier design would be altered and the Ark Royal decommissioned.

As the initial painting was scheduled to be shown during the Queen's visit to the Ark last November, Ross had under two weeks to come

up with an alternative painting, for what would now also be the Queen's last official visit to the ship before she was decommissioned.

The new 30 x 20in canvas was based on a very basic block 3D computer model, to get a size comparison between the QE and the Ark.

Ross said: "Although the resulting painting may at first glance appear to be just a simple representation of the ship at sea, it's a painting containing an underlying narrative."

"With the sad news that Ark would be leaving the Fleet, sooner than expected, I thought a simple painting of the ship would be a bit trite."

"So my picture represents the ship on her final journey, passing from the distant rain and storm clouds on the right, into the brilliant light and haven on the left."

The painting will go to HMS Queen Elizabeth when she enters service; in the interim it will reside at the Royal Navy Museum.

A few signed A2 size prints for £35, p&p free, are still available from [www.navalroadsides.co.uk](http://www.navalroadsides.co.uk)





## Specialist heads up training

A NAVAL officer has taken charge of the school responsible for training members of his own specialisation.

Cdr Heber Ackland (*above*) has been appointed Commandant of the Defence Maritime Logistics School at HMS Raleigh, providing professional training to RN logistics officers and ratings specialising as chefs, stewards, supply chain logisticians and writers.

Members of the logistics branch regularly return to the school for further training as their careers develop.

Cdr Ackland attended the school in 1992, 1999 and 2009 before taking up jobs at sea in HM ships Beagle, Southampton and Ark Royal respectively – in the case of the Ark Cdr Ackland was the ship's Logistics Commander during her last commission.

"It is a great responsibility as well as a privilege to assume the role of overseeing the training of the men and women of the Royal Navy Logistics Branch," said Cdr Ackland.

"We have first-class people who deserve the same from their training and who have to be prepared in all respects to serve with the Royal Navy on operations worldwide."

He continued: "Anyone who joins the Royal Navy as an officer or sailor can expect a hugely-exciting and varied career in the service of their country."

"Mine has been no exception, with ten very different jobs over a 20-year period including operational sea-going roles, supporting the British Armed Forces deployed in the Middle East and working in the corridors of power."



# Back to the winter for ice station duo

TWO Royal Navy men were swapping the spring for the depths of winter as *Navy News* went to press.

Lt Cdr Steven Murphy and CPO Reggie Hammond, of the Maritime Warfare Centre at HMS Collingwood, were due to spend three weeks at an Arctic base camp to help with submarine exercises.

Royal Navy boats periodically operate under the Arctic ice cap to maintain a particular set of skills and operation capabilities, as do several other nations.

The exercises also give Royal Navy personnel a chance to take part in other aspects of the serials, away from the submarines themselves.

Lt Cdr Murphy and CPO Hammond were assigned to carry out duties in the Applied Physics Ice Station (APLIS), *pictured above and right*, which will mean them facing temperatures of -40°C – and that is on a good day, as a windchill factor could bring that down to -60°C in a stiff breeze.

Then there is the possibility of meeting a polar bear...

Lt Cdr Murphy will take on the role of Range Safety Officer, while the senior rate signed up to act as his assistant.

Their main duty will be to constantly monitor the positions



of the submarines so that any potentially dangerous situations can be immediately identified and acted upon.

They will be in constant communications with the boats, and with all other transport operating in the area.

The camp houses up to 45 people at any time, divided between teams from the UK, Canada and the United States.

Each team works six hours at the command hut then spends 12 hours stood down.

During stand-downs teams carry

out secondary tasks, including daily field trips away from the camp.

During such trips personnel need to mine ice, which is melted and used in the preparation for three meals a day as well as for personal use, including washing.

Teams are also required to establish resurfacing areas for the submarines.

And even in the Arctic domestic duties call – chores such as dishwashing need to be done, and huts kept at a high standard throughout.

Before packing his snowshoes

and heading north, Lt Cdr Murphy said: "I am very much looking forward to this unique opportunity to support operations for three weeks in a part of the world that very few people get the chance to visit or experience."

CPO Hammond added: "There are not many people who will be able to say that they have been to the Arctic and actually stayed there for three weeks."

"I have seen photographs of the Northern Lights and they look amazing. I can't wait to see them with my own eyes."



• WO1 Dicky Davies

## Dicky quits after 33 years

A LONG-serving senior rate has been presented with gifts from his colleagues at Devonport to mark his retirement after 33 years.

WO1 Jeremy 'Dicky' Davies was presented with a valedictory certificate by Capt Mark Knibbs on behalf of the RN and retirement brass clock and barometer – gifts from civilian and naval colleagues.

Falklands veteran Jeremy, aged 50 – he served in HMS Broadsword – said the highlights of his career included running the final Devonport team in the Field Gun competition, and meeting the Queen twice, in 1999 for the field gun event and last year on board HMS Ocean.

Jeremy's final job was heading up the Naval Base Facilities unit, which liaises between ships and the base, including organising for ships to receive supplies and personnel in Plymouth Sound, refuelling and re-ammunitioning, and to organise events on the jetty, such as VIP visits and homecomings.

He said: "The best thing about my job was looking after and dealing with families, especially for family reunions on the jetty and decommissioning events, for instance."

"My best time on a ship was with HMS Edinburgh, where I was the Executive Warrant Officer."

"It was rewarding to be able to tweak careers and in the process make big changes for the better to people's careers – I liked that kind of positive influence."

He was inspired to join the RN by his father who served, as did other members of his family.

## Disco queens

THREE women have won Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) commendations for their part in running the Blue Light discos at Churchill Square in Helensburgh.

Louise Press, an attendance officer for Argyll and Bute Council, Pamela Torrens, MDP administrator at Couplort, and Debbie Carr, an MDP administrator at Faslane, regularly give up Friday nights to help run the safe, alcohol-free discos.

When they began in 2008 the discos attracted around 50 young punters – recent events have pulled in almost 250.



• Rear Admiral Amjad Hussain after he was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath by the Prince of Wales at an investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace. Rear Admiral Hussain is currently Director (Precision Attack) and Controller of the Navy

# Building platform for success

VOLUNTEERS from Culdrose have been helping restore part of the old railway line which ran from Helston to Gwinear until its closure in 1964.

Personnel from 824 Naval Air Squadron, Aircraft Traffic Control and the Engineering Training Section worked throughout the day carrying out vast amounts of painting, clearing debris, re-packing, adjusting the rail line and moving 16 tonnes of ballast to help build a new footpath to allow disabled access to the station at Trevarno Gardens, the current base of the Helston Railway Preservation Company.

The line, more than eight miles in length, was opened in 1887 and was a busy branch, benefiting from both the holiday trade and extensive quarrying and agricultural traffic.

Much of the material for construction of the air station at Culdrose in the 1940s was also delivered by the railway.

It connected with the main Great Western Railway London to Penzance line at Gwinear Road, and remained open until the early 1960s; passenger traffic ended in 1962 under the Beeching axe while goods trains continued to run until late 1964.

The lines had been lifted by the end of the following year, and parts of the infrastructure, such as the terminal station, were redeveloped and track bed in Helston town sold off.

But in 2002 the Helston Railway Preservation Society was formed, becoming a not-for-profit company in early 2006, aiming to restore to running order, and re-open as a heritage railway, as much of the old Helston branch as possible.

The long term objective is to re-open a three-mile section of the branch line between Nancegollan and Helston Water-ma-Trout.

Work began on clearing 40 years of vegetation



and debris in April 2005, and it took 11 months to clear less than a mile of track. In 2009 work began to build the Trevarno platform.

Members of the Helston Railway rely entirely on donations and hand-outs, giving up Thursdays and Sundays of their own time to realise their dream of putting a steam locomotive on the line to ferry passengers from Nancegollan to Water-ma-Trout in Helston, approximately five miles.

Culdrose project organiser CPO Shaun Parker said: "As a Helston resident I often walk around the Trevarno gardens with my children, so when Helston Railway requested some volunteers I jumped at the chance to get involved and help out with this very worthwhile cause."

He added: "We have had an enjoyable and demanding day and we would gladly offer our services again should the opportunity arise."

• [www.helstonrailway.co.uk](http://www.helstonrailway.co.uk)

• Culdrose personnel working on the (Helston) railway (below and left)  
Pictures: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow







## 'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

### Marching band plea for parade

THE RNA will be holding its Biennial Parade at the Cenotaph in Whitehall on Sunday September 11.

In order that the Association keeps with tradition it is looking for a military-type band that is available to make it a memorable occasion for the Naval Service.

If you know of, or are part of, such a band that is available then please get in touch with RNA HQ. Contact Philip Shuttleworth on 023 9272 3823, email [phil@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:phil@royalnavalassoc.com), or Nigel Huxtable on 023 9272 3747, email [nigel@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:nigel@royalnavalassoc.com)

### Busy year for Plymouth

MORE than 60 members of Plymouth branch attended the AGM in the WO's and SRs Mess at HMS Drake.

Chairman S/M Bob 'Pedler' Palmer congratulated the branch on completing a year of successful social, ceremonial and charitable events – with no branch funerals – and thanked all present for their support.

The coming year should prove just as busy, particularly as the branch is hosting the three-day National Conference programme in June.

One highlight of the evening was the presentation of a cheque for £757 to branch funds from S/M Carl Beeson – the proceeds of a donation from each pint of a special brew, Guzzale, sold through his Summerskills Brewery.

### Mayor intends to sign up

ALMOST 50 members and guests celebrated the 17th anniversary of the Bexhill-on-Sea branch with a dinner at the Egerton Park Indoor Bowls Club.

Shipmates welcomed the mayor of the town and an old friend of the branch, Cllr Jimmy Carroll, and his wife Sandra as guests.

Indeed, Cllr Carroll – who has attended the branch's last two Trafalgar Dinners in his capacity as Mayor and Deputy Mayor, said he enjoyed the shipmates' company so much that he and his wife intend to join as associate members when his term of office ends.

Members thanked social secretary S/M Derrick Trew and his committee, for making the evening such a success.

### Ensign presented

MEMBERS of Limavady branch presented a White Ensign to the Ulster Aviation Society at Belfast at their recent meeting.

The Ensign will be displayed in the UAS hangar, along with their collection of aircraft – many ex-Fleet Air Arm – at Long Kesh.

The speaker at this meeting was author Guy Warner, with the subject being his recently-published book *World War One Aircraft Carrier Pioneer*, the story and diaries of Belfast-born Jack McCleery.

# Jack clung to life as sharks circled below

IT IS almost 70 years since two Royal Navy heavy cruisers were sunk by Japanese aircraft off Sri Lanka in the so-called Easter Sunday Raid.

But the memory of the attack on HM ships Cornwall and Dorsetshire still remains clear in the mind of one of the survivors, former Royal Marine Jack Woodcraft, aged 88, who now lives at Ampthill in Bedfordshire.

S/M Dennis Bidwell, a friend of Jack's, took the trouble to write down the ex-Royal's recollections. This is what the old warrior said:

"It was about two o'clock in the afternoon on April 5 1942 that I found myself floating in the Indian Ocean, wearing a life jacket and hanging onto a grab-line attached to one of the crowded rafts.

I was 19 years old, and this was my first posting since passing out as a Royal Marine at Chatham a few months before.

My destination was the Far East, but getting there meant an anxious journey across the Atlantic to Canada then another ship to Ceylon [now Sri Lanka], where I finally boarded my ship, HMS Cornwall, which was with her sister ship, the cruiser Dorsetshire, at Colombo.

These two ships were involved in escort duty but the rest of the British fleet had sailed to the Maldives to avoid a surprise attack by the Japanese.

An urgent message on April 4 ordered both cruisers to put to sea immediately as a large enemy fleet was heading for Ceylon.

The ships left Colombo so quickly that crew members still ashore had to be left behind and



● Jack Woodcraft

refuelling was carried out at sea to save more precious time.

Unfortunately the ships did not get far enough away.

They were spotted by an enemy plane the next day and then attacked by a horde of carrier-based bombers.

As I was below decks in a magazine feeding the guns with ammunition I did not witness the action, but I heard the thunderous explosions in quick succession going on above and I knew we were taking a terrible pounding.

I had been transferred to a magazine from a 4in gun position after an accident with a breech which took off the tops of three of my fingers.

My heart went out to my replacement up above, facing the onslaught in my place, with little hope of survival.

The order to abandon ship was

given and we left our post in double-quick time, but the ladders between decks were listing at crazy angles so it was a bit of a mad scramble.

By the time I reached the top deck the forward part of the ship was already beneath the waves and her slide to the bottom of the ocean had started.

HMS Cornwall disappeared, her ensign being the last thing I saw as I made for the nearest raft.

It was then I heard the dreaded sound of machine-gun fire and felt sick at the thought of what might be happening, but no bullets came my way.

HMS Dorsetshire was also lost and, incredible though it seems, the aircraft sank both ship with their bombs in less than 15 minutes without loss to themselves.

They circled around for a time then flew away, leaving us to our fate.

As well as debris all around there were great patches of oil on the surface, and more was coming up from the sunken ships.

Over 400 men had lost their lives in the action, and there were at least 1,100 now in the sea, some badly wounded who needed urgent medical attention. We could only do our best for them.

The sun blazed down on those with bare heads.

There were sharks too, their ominous shapes easily spotted beneath us but they were driven off by hundreds of splashing legs.

I remember hoping we would always be able to splash vigorously enough to keep them at bay now that we were in their world.

The sun started sinking at last and the contrasting coolness was a

relief to start with.

It was at this time I had a particularly startling experience: I was moving to another grab-line when a body floated right into my arms.

I managed to move him away and he drifted off into the gathering darkness, like too many of our injured men who had died of their wounds.

The rest of us kept together, left alone with our thoughts, and quite aware of our shrinking water supply.

We knew we were in a predicament, but nobody said so and outwardly we remained resolute as the long night dragged on.

I thought about Mum and Dad, and my girlfriend Peggy waiting for me in Rochester, and how badly I wanted to see them again.

Inevitably that tiny glimmer of light appeared on the horizon and the sun rose quickly.

We could soon feel its pleasant warmth before it became a scorcher again.

Talking seemed like too much trouble now so we just hung on to our grab-lines and waited, and waited.

Occasionally a groan would be heard from the wounded, for whom the ordeal was so much worse.

Day gradually passed into evening and we prepared for another long night in the sea, where we had already been for almost 30 hours.

Then suddenly everything changed – there was shouting, and we heard that ships had been sighted.

A cruiser, HMS Enterprise, and two destroyers, HM ships Paladin and Panther, arrived and started picking us out of the sea, changing our state of silent misery to one of joyful relief."

### Diving inspiration dies aged 93

A VETERAN diving officer who worked on the search for HMS Affray, lost 60 years ago this month, has died at the age of 93.

Lt Cdr 'Uncle' Bill Filer was one of only three honorary (life) members of the **Minerwarfare Clearance Diving Officers Association (MCDOA)**.

Bill joined the Navy in 1933 as a 15-year-old Boy Seaman at HMS Ganges.

He specialised in underwater work and diving early in his career, and on gaining his commission he was appointed Executive Officer of HMS Reclaim.

His first mission was the search for the lost submarine HMS Affray, which had disappeared on April 16 1951 and was believed to have sunk off the Nab Tower, at the entrance to the Solent.

She was later found in 86 metres of water on the edge of Hurd's Deep, a valley in the floor of the English Channel.

Controversy still surrounds the reasons why the boat, with 75 men aboard her, was lost.

For his efforts in identifying the boat and seeking the cause of her loss Bill was awarded an MBE.

Bill spent 25 years of his 19 in the Mob on diving duties, and was instrumental in trials of equipment and techniques.

For a full biography and tributes, see the January 2011 news archive section of the website [www.mcdoa.org.uk](http://www.mcdoa.org.uk)

### New chairman

CHESHUNT branch has a new chairman after S/M Vic Everest stood down.

Falklands veteran S/M Eric Robinson steps into Vic's shoes, while S/M Francis Higgins becomes vice chairman.

S/M Vic, a former Ganges Boy who served in HMS Manxman during the Suez Crisis in 1956, held the office of chairman for 12 years, and has served on the branch committee for a quarter of a century.

## Cheers to the two Didos!

TWO anniversaries will be celebrated during the HMS Dido Association reunion in Bolton this month.

The World War 2 cruiser (70 years) and post-war frigate (50 years) will both be to the fore as members gather in the town, which adopted the cruiser after raising £1.2m to complete and launch the ship.

The frigate continued the relationship with Bolton, which culminated in the crews being granted the Freedom of the Borough in 1973.

The reunion gets under way on Friday April 29, while the main events are scheduled for the Saturday, when the AGM is held in the morning.

On completion, members will assemble on the steps of Bolton Town Hall for a medal awards ceremony.

First the new association standard will be dedicated, after which the Pingat Jasa Malaysian medal will be awarded to 20 members who served in the Singapore/Malaysia area at the time of the conflict.

Medals will be handed out by the Mayor of Bolton, Cllr John Byrne, assisted by Mike England, a former Commanding Officer of the frigate.

Mike accepted the Freedom Scroll from the then-mayor in 1973, and presented a Naval sword, which remains on display next to the door of the mayor's parlour.

The Association is also having a special brew of beer made called Anniversary Ale, which will be available during the weekend at the Holiday Inn, Bolton, where the reunion is being held.

Bank Top Brewery of Bolton have agreed to sponsor the event by creating the beer, which should be available both bottled and draught during the weekend.



### Three (not) of a kind

PICTURED above are three submarines, a shot taken from HMS Adamant in Rothesay Bay in the mid-1950s by Ean Beattie when he was an ERA onboard the submarine depot ship.

What makes the picture unusual, said Ean, is that the three members of the 3rd Submarine Squadron all had different forms of propulsion.

Left is diesel-electric A-boat HMS Andrew, centre is HMS Scotsman, test-boat for electric propulsion, and right is HMS Explorer (Ean doesn't think it is sister-boat Excalibur), driven by volatile hydrogen peroxide which earned her the nickname HMS Exploder.

The shot is rare as Explorer was usually secured to a buoy on the far side of the bay, said Ean – for obvious reasons...

### £50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our February edition (*right*) was HMS Leopard, and the island she assisted was Tristan da Cunha.

The winner of our £50 prize was Mr B Taft, of Broadstairs in Kent.

This month's mystery ship (*pictured above*) was a battleship which saw action in both World Wars, and whose name has been very much in the headlines in recent months with regards the future capabilities of the Royal Navy.

Her appearance changed dramatically at various times in her career – this picture shows her in her later guise.

The lead ship of her class, she was badly damaged in an attack by Italian frogmen in the Mediterranean in World War 2 but later returned to the front line.

What was her name? Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News,



HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is May 13 2011. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

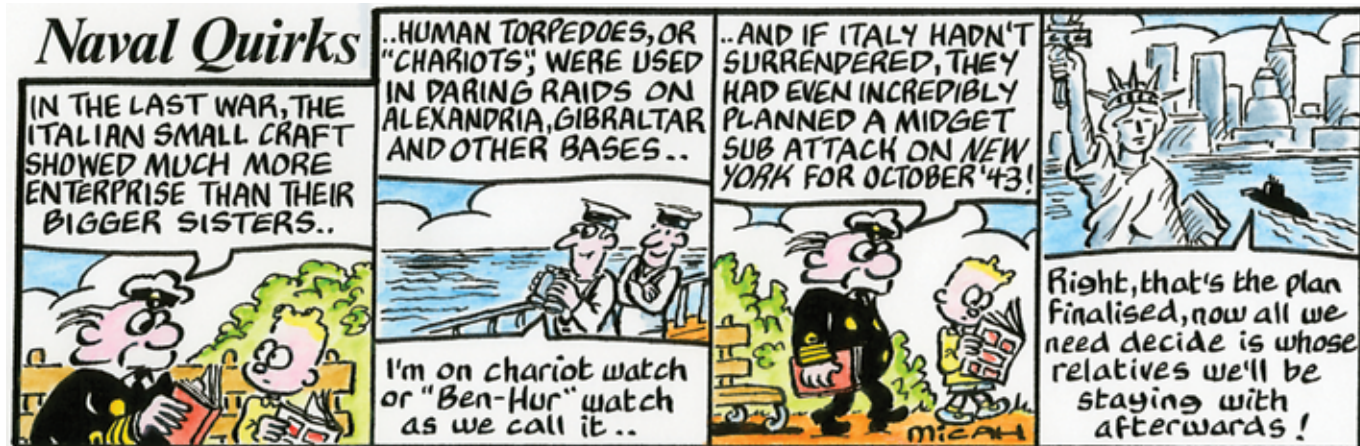
The winner will be announced in our June edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

### MYSTERY PICTURE 194

Name .....

Address .....

My answer .....





## York lose former secretary

MEMBERS of York branch, and the Yorkshire branch of the Fleet Air Arm Association, are mourning the death of S/M Mick Farrington, who crossed the bar on February 25 at the age of 80.

Secretary of the York branch for the past ten years – his wife Pat took the minutes – Mick was chairman of the FAA branch and was a rum bosun in the Armourers Association.

One of his interests, making ships in bottles, also gained him honorary membership of the 8th Destroyer Association, after he started making them ships in bottles for their annual raffles.

Mick's main passion was as proud owner of a prize-winning herd of pedigree Tamworth pigs.

But he will also be fondly remembered for his input to one of the highlights of the social calendar.

"Our Trafalgar Night Dinners will not be quite the same again," said York branch chairman S/M Peter Shepherd.

"Mick used to organise the after-dinner entertainment with readings taken from the officers' log books, which covered the Battle of Trafalgar.

"And he finished off with his own rendition of the battle, playing Nelson and Hardy – but after the toast to the Immortal Memory, not always in the correct order."

There were 14 standards on parade at the funeral, including 11 Area RNA, York and District branch, the Yorkshire FAA and the standard of the York branch of the Royal British Legion.

## Tribute to a lifesaver

JUST over 50 years ago, in February 1961, two young Naval airmen from Culdrose were travelling by car to represent the air base at a cross-country race.

The car was involved in a collision with a lorry near Bodmin, and the driver, NA Keith Madgwick, died of his injuries before reaching hospital.

His passenger, S/M Trevor Garrod, received serious head injuries and did not regain consciousness until after his oppo's funeral had taken place.

Trevor had recovered sufficiently to attend the inquest, where he learned from police evidence that Keith had tried to take evasive action, and had he not done so Trevor would in all probability have died in the accident as well.

Since then S/M Trevor has been convinced that Keith's actions saved his life.

In the intervening years, while living in Paisley, Trevor has made the long journey south to Helston several times to pay his respects.

However, on the 50th anniversary, distance and ill-health prevented him from travelling.

But he has perpetuated the memory of his friend by requesting assistance from Falmouth branch, who laid a wreath on his behalf.

## New garden

A JOINT effort between Pershore branch and Wychavon District Council has resulted in the creation of a new memorial garden in Abbey Park.

The current war memorial, inside the Abbey itself, commemorates those who died in the two World Wars.

The new garden, designed by the council's parks department, will recall those who died in conflicts after 1945.

Shipmates of the branch, which raised around £10,000 to create the garden, were joined by students from Pershore High School for the ceremonial cutting of the first sod of earth, carried out by branch chairman S/M Ted Annis.

The garden is due to be officially opened early next month.

# Ton trio welcomed by Quorn

MINEHUNTER HMS Quorn paid a visit to Ipswich to be awarded the Freedom of the Borough – and one of the groups welcoming her was the Ton Class Association (TCA).

The Tons, which served the Royal Navy and other allied navies from the 1950s to the 90s were the predecessors of the glass-reinforced plastic (GRP) ships of the Hunt and Sandown classes.

And HMS Wilton, built in 1973 as one of the last of the Tons, was the first warship to be built of GRP, using moulds taken from the wooden hull of HMS Derrington.

TCA representatives Peter Down, Bob Bragg

and Rod Hogan had served together on board HMS Houghton in 1961 in the famed 104 (Blackfoot) Minesweeper Squadron, based in Singapore, where Association secretary Peter had been Bob and Rod's Divisional Officer.

Bob and Rod presented a TCA shield to Lt David Louis, Quorn's Executive Officer, and the veterans enjoyed a thorough tour of the ship, guided by AB Dave Sims, who listened "with considerable patience, and well-concealed disbelief, to reminiscences of explosive cutters and runs ashore in Bugis Street," said Peter.

PO Frampton brought the sweeper sailors

up to date on Seafox, the current mine countermeasures automated weapons system.

The old hands were full of admiration for the capability of the kit and the quiet competence of the operators.

The TCA was founded in 1987 and now has more than 1,300 active members in the UK, USA, Europe, South Africa, South America, the Far East and Australia.

Ranks range from stoker to admiral, and the TCA is one of the biggest RN ship or squadron associations; membership includes individuals from other navies that operated Ton-class ships.

# Memorial unveiled for 'forgotten ship'



● The memorial to HMS Glamorgan is dedicated at Hookers Point in the Falklands

AT LAST there stands a memorial to the 'forgotten ship' on the islands she helped liberate 30 years ago.

On Hookers Point outside Stanley, and surrounded by small square granite setts representing the ship's company, is the monument to HMS Glamorgan.

Nineteen miles from that spot in 1982, the guided missile destroyer was struck by an Argentine Exocet missile in one of the final acts of the Falklands war.

Almost 30 years later and a memorial to her sacrifice was formally dedicated in the presence of three dozen Glamorgan veterans, plus 150 Falkland Islanders, while current Falklands guardian HMS Clyde was anchored offshore and Typhoon fighters flew over in tribute.

That memorial, fittingly, comprises polished Welsh granite, cut near Pwllheli, and transported 8,000 miles to the South Atlantic.

The drive to erect a Glamorgan monument was sparked by a pilgrimage to the Falklands by the ship's navigator in 1982, Cdr Ian Inskip.

"There were memorials on the islands for all the ships lost and all units which had suffered significant casualties – except for Glamorgan," he said.

"Mention the Falklands War, and images of Sheffield, Coventry, Antelope, Ardent, Atlantic

Conveyor always spring to mind. Few people know that Glamorgan was hit by an Exocet just two days before the Argentine surrender and came within inches of blowing up with the loss of hundreds of lives."

Seven years and £15,000 later and Glamorgan is no longer the forgotten ship. Indeed, far from being forgotten, her deeds in 1982 deserve to take their place alongside the finest actions in RN annals.

Glamorgan was in the thick of the fighting from day one. She led HMS Arrow and Alacrity inshore to bombard Stanley

airport in broad daylight – and send a message to the enemy that the Royal Navy meant business. The Argentinians responded by bombing the trio, causing some damage to Glamorgan.

Her guns paralysed defenders on Pebble Island allowing the SAS to move in and destroy every enemy aircraft on the airstrip.

The ship then served as a decoy for the landings at San Carlos by steaming close to shore off Stanley, convincing the Argentinians that the attempt to liberate the islands would be made near the capital.

And finally, on June 12 1982, the ship provided fire support to 45 Commando as the marines stormed Two Sisters. As the destroyer returned to take her place in the relative safety of the invasion task force, she was detected by a land-based Exocet battery, which promptly fired a missile.

The ship took sufficient evasive action to ensure that much of the Exocet's blast was diverted into the air, but the helicopter exploded in the hangar and 14 men died.

Had the Exocet hit three inches lower, it would have exploded in the main missile magazine – and the resulting explosion would have torn the ship apart in the manner of HMS Hood.

As it was, crew fought for three and a half hours to save Glamorgan, flooding compartments, melting wardroom spoons for welding, using sacks of potatoes to improve stability, while firefighters ignored ammunition 'cooking off' to tackle the raging blazes.

"Glamorgan became the first ship to survive an Exocet hit, but news of her remarkable achievement was buried under the news of the Argentine surrender, and the ship is largely forgotten," said Cdr Inskip proudly.

Glamorgan's 1982 ensign was draped over the memorial alongside the Falklands flag before both were removed to reveal the monument at the official unveiling.

The memorial can be found just off the Stanley Airport Road. If you look up after reading the inscription on it, you will face the spot where Glamorgan was hit.

# Rum returns to Falklands

A MUCH-travelled bottle of rum made its second trip to the Falklands, where it was finally cracked open in tribute to its former owner.

The bottle of Pusser's Rum was originally bought in Gibraltar in 1982 by Kelvin McCallum, to be shared with his father when his ship, guided missile destroyer HMS Glamorgan, returned to Portsmouth.

But Glamorgan headed south instead of north, playing a leading role in the task group which sailed to the Falklands to retake the islands after Argentina invaded.

Kelvin was one of 14 sailors who died in the South Atlantic when Glamorgan was struck by an Exocet missile fired from an improvised launcher on a lorry trailer on June 12, shortly before the Argentinian surrender.

The ship had taken evasive action – turning stern-on – when the missile was spotted, but was still struck a glancing blow; the Exocet caused Glamorgan's fuelled-up helicopter to explode and also badly damaged a galley below the hangar deck.

Sailors had to battle the flames for hours to prevent the loss of the ship.

The men were buried at sea, but a shipmate

brought the bottle of rum home to Kelvin's father, who kept it until he died.

Years later, a chance meeting between Kelvin's mother and Glamorgan veteran Hugh Upward led to the bottle being passed on, in the hope that survivors of the conflict could enjoy it.

Hugh kept the bottle safe, and it went with him back to the Falklands when a group of Glamorgan veterans flew out to dedicate a memorial to their fallen comrades.

Ian Inskip, the navigator of the destroyer in 1982 and now a member of the HMS Glamorgan Association, said that the bottle was brought to the Memorial Wood near Stanley Cemetery, where a tree was dedicated to Kelvin, and his shipmates drank a tot from the much-travelled bottle in his memory.

The bottle did not travel alone – Charles Tobias, President of Pusser's Rum, heard of the story and donated two cases of rum plus mugs to accompany it on its way south.

Pusser's is still made to the Admiralty's rum specification, and royalties are paid to the Tot Fund which provides on-shore facilities for serving and retired sailors.

## Pressure is off for Jack

S/M JACK Whelan (on right of picture) is seen receiving a barometer on the occasion of his retirement as chairman of South Harrow branch.

The presentation was made by the man who steps into his shoes, S/M Brian Joy.

S/M Jack is standing down as he is moving out of the area, and all at the branch and South Harrow Royal British Legion wish him well for his retirement.



## Leeds entertains Ark group

LEEDS No1 (Headingley) branch had the privilege of entertaining some 20 plus members of the ship's company of HMS Ark Royal on the eve of their final parade through the city centre.

Ark sailors presented branch chairman S/M Richard Hancock with a number of mementos – a two-handled drinking bowl, a framed photograph of the aircraft carrier, a silver salver (which had been on the ship for 20 years) and a plaque.

Branch secretary S/M John Rance rang the branch ship's bell for 'up spirits', and everybody present had a tot of Pusser's rum – at which point the drinking cup was christened.

S/M Ron Shaw said: "I went to see the march on the following day and all were superbly turned out with the Royal Marines Band of Scotland at their head.

"I was so proud of them, remembering that they told me some of them would never go to sea again – how sad for the Royal Navy."

## Historian's Enigma plea

HISTORIAN Hugh Sebag-Montefiore, author of the best-selling book *Enigma: The Battle for the Code*, is looking for witnesses or the families of witnesses who observed the capture of U-110 and its Enigma machine and codebooks by personnel in HM ships Aubretia, Broadway and Bulldog.

This is in connection with an exhibition commemorating the 70th anniversary of the capture which is planned to take place on May 9 at Bletchley Park, the national Codes Centre.

Please contact Hugh Sebag-Montefiore on 0207 435 1035 or email [sebags@hsmontefiore.com](mailto:sebags@hsmontefiore.com)

## Walking to help Millie

THE RNA Walking Group is intending to undertake the Waendel Walk next month to raise money for a six-year-old girl whose family are hoping to send her to the United States for life-saving treatment.

S/M Maurice Weight has asked shipmates to join him on the walk, details of which can be found at [www.wellingborough.gov.uk/waendelwalk](http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/waendelwalk)

More details are available by emailing [rnarushden@hotmail.com](mailto:rnarushden@hotmail.com)

Millie D'Cruz Parsely, from Milton Keynes, suffers from metachromatic leukodystrophy (MLD).

## Valentine lunch

MORE than 30 members and guests – including members of the Merchant Navy – sat down to what has become Bourne branch's traditional Valentine's Lunch to honour the ladies who support their partners.

The programme included speeches, a four-course meal, raffle and the comradeship for which Bourne branch is well-known.

During the lunch a presentation was made to S/M Ted Hayford for his time as branch chairman.

## Russian medal for John

S/M JOHN Hale has been presented with a Russian anniversary medal at a meeting of the Cyprus branch.

The former Royal Marine was handed his Russian Federation 65th End of War Anniversary Medal by Sir Edward du Cann, president of the branch.

Sir Edward read from the certificate, and stated that "John and his veteran shipmates guarded the Russian Convoys during the 1939-45 War", making them greatly appreciated by the

Russians, who regarded these convoys as their lifeline.

S/M John joined the Royal Marines in Plymouth in 1942, two months shy of his 18th birthday.

The following year he was chosen to be an Orderly at the Quebec Conference, attended by Sir Winston Churchill.

John's first ship was HMS Jamaica (1943-45) in which he did his time on Russian Convoys.

He left the Corps in 1955 and spent many years on Civvy Street in the safety sector.



## Make your vote count

IF YOU want to vote in the local and devolved government elections next month, please make sure you are registered.

The deadline to register is April 14; and you can do so in one of three ways:

- as a Service Voter
- as an Ordinary Voter
- as an Overseas Voter

Service personnel and their partners who are overseas during an election can choose to vote either by post or by proxy, whether registered as Ordinary, Overseas or a Service voter.

Full details can be found in DIN 2010 01/175.

## Pensions report published

THE Independent Public Service Pensions Commission (IPSPC) published its final report into public service pension schemes in early March.

The report has been presented to the Government with recommendations for change, which are now being considered.

Among the recommendations are:

- that the normal pension age should move from 55 to 60 for Armed Forces with an actuarially-fair adjustment;

- that the Government must honour in full the pension rights, including existing benefits and conditions, already accrued by scheme members;

- that changes should be achieved before the next election in 2015, although some schemes including the Armed Forces may require a longer timeframe.

The Government is examining the recommendations of the report, which are complex, and will respond in due course.

For further details see DIB 2011/18 or a full copy of the report can be viewed online at: [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pensionscommission](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pensionscommission).

## Mental health helpline

A MENTAL health helpline for veterans has been launched to give veterans and their families expert advice on their often complex mental health issues.

The Government is funding the helpline to the tune of £200,000 for a one-year pilot of the Combat Stress Support Helpline which is delivered by Rethink Mental Illness.

The Department of Health nominated the charities Combat Stress and Rethink Mental Illness to run the service together.

Health minister Simon Burns said: "This funding will provide veterans and their families with a service that will help and support them whenever and wherever they need it."

"This is also a great example of how the expertise of charities can be used to foster a stronger and healthier society."

Defence minister Andrew Robathan said: "The mental health of our personnel and veterans is a top priority of the government and it is right that we do all we can to support them and their families."

■ Freephone 0800 138 1619

## Compensation legislation

TWELVE months on from the Review into the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme by Admiral the Lord Boyce, all of the recommended improvements have been made to the scheme.

The final legislative changes to the Scheme were laid in Parliament on February 28.

More information can be found in DIB 2011/16.

# NFF need your views

THE new issue of *Homeport* is out and about, please pick up your free copy. If you or members of your family would like to receive the magazine free of charge posted directly to your address, then just let us know..., writes Jane Williams of the NFF.

### ARMED FORCES BILL: COMMITTEE REPORT

The Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill has published (March 10 2011) its Special Report on the Armed Forces Bill.

The Committee was tasked by the House of Commons to scrutinise the Bill which makes various changes to existing military law.

The Committee has taken evidence from a range of witnesses and made several visits to military establishments around the UK.

The report notes the complex debate surrounding the Military Covenant, and outlines the Committee's findings on a range of matters, including the work of the Service Complaints Commissioner for the Armed Forces.

The Armed Forces Bill will undergo further stages in the House of Commons in the coming weeks.

The report is available via our website: [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk) or directly via the Committee website: [www.parliament.uk/afbc](http://www.parliament.uk/afbc)

The NFF gave verbal evidence to the Committee; Mr James Arbuthnot, MP for North East Hampshire, was the chair.

At the end of the session he said: "Thank you very much indeed for a fantastic session."

"I think that has been one of the most valuable evidence sessions I have been to. We are most grateful."

Possibly because we kept to time and answered the questions.

### THE ARMED FORCES COMPENSATION SCHEME

New legislation completes implementation of the Boyce review. All the recommendations have been adopted.

The NFF represented all three Family Federations as part of the study and that work now continues with us representing all three Federations on the Central Advisory Committee on Pensions and Compensation.

Have you applied for compensation under the scheme? Did the system work?

### PENSIONS

The Independent Public Service Pensions Commission (IPSPC) has published its final report (March 10 2011) following the review of public sector pension schemes.

Lord Hutton was invited to chair an independent review by the Government.

The report sets out his recommendations to the Government on pension arrangements that are sustainable in the long term, fair to both the public service workforce and the taxpayer and consistent with the economic challenges ahead, while protecting accrued rights.

The MOD brief highlighting the key recommendations of the report, together with HM Treasury full report (summary of recommendations at Annex A) plus related information including a FAQ document are available on the website: [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk).

The Government's response to the report's recommendations are yet to be announced. As soon as we have this information we will post it onto the website. What do you think? Let us know....

### A new approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability

The Minister of State for

Children and Families, Sarah Teather, has launched a Green Paper on special educational needs and disability.

The paper *Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability* makes wide-ranging proposals to respond to the frustrations of children and young people, their families and the professionals who work with them.

Proposals include a new single assessment process to identify Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the option of a personal budget for all families with children with a statement of SEN.

The MOD encourages all interested parties to put forward their views on the proposals (closing date June 30 2011). Full details are available via our website: [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk)

### AFCAS

Feedback wanted – the Royal Navy want your feedback and opinions on key matters of concern.

The Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) is being distributed from February 1 to 12,000 randomly-selected personnel. The survey runs until the end of April.

The surveys are a chance for you to communicate your views to decision makers. They provide evidence on the impact of current challenges and help identify emerging issues.

The NFF encourages those in receipt to complete them.

### ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

You must be registered to vote to have your say in the forthcoming UK local and devolved government Elections, as well as the Referendum on the Alternative Voting system – all scheduled for May 5 2011.

Deadline for registrations and changes to existing details is April 14 2011.

Personnel and their spouses/civil partners can register to vote as a Service Voter, Ordinary Voter or an Overseas Voter.

If you are overseas or away from your UK residence during an election you can elect to vote by post or proxy.

A similar initiative to that during the 2010 elections will be put in place for the upcoming elections for personnel in Afghanistan.

Full information can be found via [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk)

### SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF DEPLOYED PERSONNEL

A nationwide support program is available to forces families during the major deployment to Afghanistan.

There will be regular social events and updates at a local and national level. These events aim to support families and nurture a sense of well-being and an ability to cope at a difficult time.

More details are available on-line: [www.rcom.mod.uk](http://www.rcom.mod.uk)

### Forcesline

Operated on behalf of the MOD by Armed Forces charity SSAFA Forces Help, the confidential service is totally independent of the military Chain of Command and is accessible through free phone numbers from anywhere in the world.

Forcesline offers support to members of the Armed Forces, their families and veterans. It is a free and confidential helpline. Callers can be of any rank and from any Service.

The issues dealt with range from simple queries to more complex emotional concerns, worries or problems. The telephone helpline is complemented by a secure email service.

Freephone numbers

- From the UK (Main Line): 0800 731 4880
- From Germany: 0800 1827 395



- From Cyprus: 800 91065
- From the Falkland Islands # 6111

- From anywhere in the world (Call-back) +44 (0)1980 630854

- From Operational Theatres, to enable access through Paradigm's phone system, dial the appropriate access number then enter \*201 at the PIN prompt.

### SERVICE FAMILY ACCOMMODATION

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) affects everyone in Defence; including the organisation and people who look after the Defence estate – which includes Service Family Accommodation (SFA).

One way the MOD will achieve its current and future objectives is by aiming to improve the way the Defence estate is managed, and the Defence Secretary, Dr Liam Fox, announced the intention to establish the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) with effect from April 1 2011. The DIO will replace the existing Defence Estates (DE) organisation.

The DIO will centralise management of MOD property infrastructure to better support military capability.

But what does the formation of DIO mean in practice for Service families living in SFA?

- Customer service:

Other than the fact that correspondence that used to come from DE will now come from the DIO, you should not notice any changes in the level of service that you receive.

Existing contracts will continue and staff and contractors across Defence will continue to focus on customer service.

Air Commodore Alan Opie (Head of Operations Housing) confirmed his commitment to ensuring that DE Ops Housing and its contractors maintain and continue to seek to improve their customer service levels.

He had this message for SFA occupants: "I fully understand the importance of maintaining our customer service for everyone living in Service Family Accommodation."

"Although there are major changes coming in the way Defence infrastructure is managed, I am confident that the processes and plan that we have in place will continue to effectively support and continue to improve our service to Service Families."

- Maintenance contracts:

The current contract with MODern Housing Solutions for the maintenance and repair of SFA in England and Wales, which is due to end in late 2012, will be extended to April 2013 to coincide with the expiry of the maintenance contracts in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

This will enable the DIO to let a new National Housing Prime (NHP) contract for SFA throughout the United Kingdom from April 2013.

The advert for the new contract was published on February 9 and it is expected that the new contractor will be appointed in October 2012.

The new NHP contract may include activities currently carried out by MOD staff including housing allocations, provision of furniture, and the Move In and Move Out role.

These tasks have been included as options within the new contract and will be assessed against the in-house delivery of the services in consultation with the Trade Unions before a decision is made.

In developing the new contract, the views of Service families will be sought through regular consultation with the Families Federations before the decision is made.

Meanwhile, DE Ops Housing staff and its contractors will continue to focus on customer service so customers should continue to use the normal maintenance and repairs helpdesks, as well as the Housing Information Centre contacts.

These are all available at the SFA website at [www.mod.uk/servicefamilyaccommodation](http://www.mod.uk/servicefamilyaccommodation)

We are being kept up to date with announcements, which will be available on our website as soon as they become available, however, there is concern about the shape of things to come.

Interestingly the Unite national officer Kevin Coyne said: "With 2,500 fewer staff, the maintenance and running of MOD properties and land will be run on a shoestring doing our Forces and their families a disservice."

"We urge the Government to step back from this decision."

We are watching this area very closely. Your experiences form the basis of our discussions, to get in touch with NFF e-mail: [Admin@nff.org.uk](mailto:Admin@nff.org.uk), telephone: 02392 654374 or write to NFF, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.



## Worried about what happens next?

THE White Ensign Association (WEA) have offered to visit all principal bases, units and establishments to present on *Your Future*.

The presentation is full of useful guidance and advice for anyone leaving the Service now and in the years to come.

In addition, if any ships or squadrons are interested in the presentation, please contact the WEA to request.

This is one of a range of services offered by the WEA to help people of all ranks and rates who may be leaving the Service soon or who are worried about redundancy.

WEA staff can explain the intricacies of the Armed Forces redundancy and pension schemes, and help people with their decision-making.

These might include timing leaving the Service to best financial advantage or, for those on Armed Forces Pension Scheme 75, whether to elect to take pension commutation and exchange a reduction in taxable pension up to the age of 55 for a larger tax-free lump sum on departure.

Further, the association has a panel of Independent Financial Advisers who offer free, confidential, initial advice on how to manage your money.

The WEA also offers Employment Services that complement the MOD's Career Transition Partnership.

For more information, visit [www.whiteensign.co.uk](http://www.whiteensign.co.uk), or to arrange a *Your Future* presentation call Emma Copland on 0207 407 8658.

## Check your redundancy figures

IF you have used the Armed Forces Redundancy Calculator available on the MOD intranet before March 16, you are urged to check your figures.

The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency became aware of a possible error in the calculations and brought out an amended version at 18:00 on March 15.

The error affects some Service personnel in the following four groups:

- those on AFRS 06 and AFRS 10 terms with a break in service;
- those on AFRS 10 with an enlistment date before age 18;
- those on AFRS 10 terms who are officers with an enlistment date before age 21;
- those on AFRS 06 terms who are rejoinders.

Not all personnel in these groups have been affected by the problem so if you have previously run the forecast, the calculation might indeed be correct.

Some 70,000 financial forecasts for personnel have already been run, but it is believed that immediate impact is limited to RAF personnel.



# Redundancy update

THE RAF announced their first tranche of redundancies on March 1, accompanied by a statement by the Chief of Defence Staff highlighting the need for the redundancy programme across the Armed Forces.

The Naval Service plan to announce their first tranche of redundancies via a Defence Instruction and Notice (DIN) on April 4.

This DIN will give the details of those categories, branches and specialisations of personnel – known as ‘redundancy fields’ – that will be considered by the Redundancy Selection Boards for the first tranche.

It will also cover in detail eligibility, the application process, how the programme will be conducted, what compensation and entitlements people will be due if made redundant and details of all the resettlement procedures.

Separate instructions will be published for future redundancy tranches and it is anticipated that the second tranche of the programme will commence on September 30 and, if necessary, a third tranche will be initiated in 2012.

The key dates for the first tranche of redundancies are as follows:

■ April 4: DIN issued announcing redundancy fields;

■ May 16: Closure date for applications for redundancy;

■ June/July: Selection Boards consider applicants and non-applicants;

■ September 30: Personnel selected for redundancies to be notified;

■ March 30/April 1 2012: Applicants selected for redundancy to have left the Service;

■ October 1 2012: Non-applicants selected for redundancy to have left the Service.

It is appreciated that the redundancy programme will generate a huge amount of interest and many questions.

A comprehensive briefing pack has been sent out to all Chains of Command who will conduct briefings once the DIN is issued to ensure that the process is understood fully by all personnel.

In addition, there are dedicated redundancy web pages on the Defence Intranet and RNCom which provide links to information and key documents.

An estimate of pension and redundancy entitlements can be obtained via the Armed Forces Redundancy Calculator which can be accessed at [www.mod-rc.co.uk](http://www.mod-rc.co.uk).

It should be noted that the

information provided by the Calculator is only indicative and does not constitute a formal statement of the payments that an individual will receive on exit from the Service on redundancy.

Personnel considering applying for redundancy may wish to seek independent financial advice.

A dedicated Fleet Redundancy Cell has been established in Navy Command Headquarters who will process all the redundancy applications and letters.

Personnel are encouraged to use the Divisional/Regimental system for advice in the first instance but the cell will also be able to answer queries relating to the redundancy process.

They can be contacted from April 4 as follows:

Fleet Redundancy Cell  
Room G43, West Battery  
Whale Island  
Portsmouth PO2 8DX  
Mil: 93832 8987  
Civ: +44 (0)23 9262 8987  
DII: [FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELL@mod.uk](mailto:FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELL@mod.uk)  
CELL MAILBOX or email: [Fleet-redundancy@mod.uk](mailto:Fleet-redundancy@mod.uk)

The aim throughout is to ensure that all personnel have ready access to the information they will need to make informed decisions and choices.

# Celebrating diversity within the Royal Navy



## Human to the fore

AT the start of the year the UK Armed Forces Humanist Association (UKAFHA) held their inaugural conference and AGM at Amport House.

Thirty people attended from all three Services and the civil service (some of whom are pictured top).

Attendee Cdr John Craig of MCM2 said: “The 2009 British Social Attitudes Survey showed that more people (51 per cent) now consider themselves to have ‘no religion’ than to belong to any particular faith, yet – as our Service is steeped in tradition – many of our core ceremonies, from Divisions to Remembrance Sunday parades, have prominent religious elements built into them.”

“As a result, many sailors feel deeply uncomfortable when the religious aspects of Service life conflict with their personal beliefs, to the extent that they either

feel compelled to participate in ceremonies or feel excluded if they decide not to participate.

“There have been many positive developments in recent years in terms of recognising other religious viewpoints – with the MOD appointing Chaplains to represent non-Christians – so it makes sense for the ‘silent majority’ to be recognised.”

“And the UKAFHA is here to make sure that those who seek to lead a moral life through their own actions, based on a common humanity rather than belief in a deity, are suitably represented.”

Those seeking more information on Humanism, or who wish to show their support by joining the UKAFHA, should either visit the UKAFHA website at [www.armedforceshumanists.org.uk](http://www.armedforceshumanists.org.uk) or contact Cdr Craig via his dii account at [FLEET-PORFLOT-MCM2CDRSO1](mailto:FLEET-PORFLOT-MCM2CDRSO1).



## Jewish celebration

THE start of 2011 also brought the Annual Jewish Faith Conference for the Armed Forces (pictured above).

Among the people attending were personnel from the Fleet Air Arm and Royal Marines Band; and the weekend was led by Rabbi Arnold Saunders, the Jewish Civilian Chaplain to the Military.

The weekend, called the Moral Leadership Project, included a lot of debate regarding the rights of prisoners of war in accordance with the Torah (the Jewish Bible), a talk on the history of command and control in the Bible, and a brief by the Army employment branch of what it is doing to improve its anti-bullying policy.

If you want to learn more about Judaism or Jewish life in the Armed Forces please contact: Lt Dan Weil on [daniel.weil568@mod.uk](mailto:daniel.weil568@mod.uk) or Rabbi Arnold Saunders on [42X-CCM-Jewish@mod.uk](mailto:42X-CCM-Jewish@mod.uk).

## Proud to Serve

THE Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transexual online network for the British Armed Forces (found online at [www.proud2serve.net](http://www.proud2serve.net)) has had a revamp.

The website, which was first set up in 2005, provides support, information and networking for serving personnel, veterans and

military families at home and abroad.

This year has seen the Naval Service rise in the esteem of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

In 2010 the Naval service ranked at 179, but 2011 has brought an uplift to 112.

**There is a regular Equality and Diversity newsletter available for members of the Naval Service. Further information is available on the Navy Command E&D Defence Intranet Site.**

# Spot the augmentee

THE Augmentation and Crisis Manpower Planning (ACMP) Cell is unheard of for a majority of Naval Service personnel.

However, most sailors and marines will have been tasked or tracked by the ACMP team at some point.

You may have unknowingly already been managed by the team – either via deploying operationally as an individual augmentee or through being removed from your day job to support an exercise or event.

Why is this small team important to you?

Firstly, it offers a broad range of opportunities and rewards through diverse, challenging roles across all the theatres of operations that UK forces support.

Secondly, you may find yourself being directed to support an operation, exercise or event and it is important that you understand why you have been identified and what your responsibilities are throughout your deployment.

The following few paragraphs describe the augmentation process and the benefits for individuals.

### AUGMENTATION – THE FORCE GENERATION PROCESS

What is augmentation in simple terms?

Augmentation is the process by which individual augmentees (IAs) are force generated (selected, trained and deployed) to meet additional personnel requirements in support of Operations, Exercises and Events.

In the current climate, where the UK is still committed in Iraq and Afghanistan, the majority of operational IAs are provided in support of Land operations.

In addition to these familiar campaigns, ACMP coordinate the IAs for other discrete operations, including activity in the Middle East, Africa, and the Balkans.

However, the Royal Navy's maritime role in conducting anti-piracy patrols, humanitarian disaster relief efforts, maintaining an amphibious capability and planning for potential UK based support tasks to Civil Authorities means that the service has a truly global effect.

Whilst the total RN/RM commitment fluctuates as operational demand fluctuates, and large-scale seasonal exercises and events take place, there is a significant, enduring Naval contribution.

At the time of writing, the forecast commitment for 2011 consists of an average contribution of approximately 700-750 posts per day, with peaks reaching



## Drafty's corner

1,500-1,600 per day over the summer period.

Inevitably, this is a challenge that is delivered by intelligent prioritisation but does, inevitably, equate to a significant number of gaps in lower priority posts across the fleet

### So how does it work?

The ACMP team operate as the initial MOD/PJHQ/NCHQ focus for all requests for RN/RM personnel provision.

The requirement ‘sponsor’ (ie. Deployed Operational HQ, Exercise Directing Staff, Public Event Organiser) will identify a job that needs to be filled. In the case of an operational post, a job description will be written and submitted to PJHQ for endorsement.

Subsequently, the demand will be approved by the Defence Augmentation Cell (DAC) who will decide which Front Line Command is most suitable to provide the individual.

Currently the RN/RM provides 25 per cent of all UK Defence IAs.

If the job is given to the RN/RM then ACMP has typically three months to deliver the IA; in this period ACMP decide which Naval Personnel Team (NPT) will have the skill sets required for the job, and direct the NPT to nominate an individual for subsequent training and deployment – volunteers are always selected if they fulfil the Service requirements.

Many of these jobs become enduring and it is for the respective career managers to ensure that future incumbents are identified in time.

Throughout the process, ACMP maintain oversight to ensure the posts are sustained effectively and to troubleshoot if required.

Sometimes urgent requirements may dictate that individuals are required to deploy to satisfy operational demand within the normal three months notice period.

This can occur for several reasons:

■ Firstly, an Urgent Operational Requirement – a new requirement may be deemed so important that an individual is to be force generated to support another programme;

■ Secondly, an Amended Requirement – operational theatres are always evolving and job specs are revised – this change could mean the identified individual already in the training pipeline no longer matches the job spec (eg rank variation) and so a career manager will need to identify another individual;

■ Thirdly, Non-Deployable – the individual identified may be forced to withdraw for a number of reasons (injury, illness, welfare) and the CM will need to identify another individual.

In all the examples above ACMP will liaise closely with the CMs and higher HQ's to ensure that the affected individual's circumstances are managed appropriately.

### TRAINING

Once an individual is selected they will be loaded onto a variety of pre-deployment training (PDT) courses by their CM.

The majority of operational IAs will attend the two-week OPTAG course at the Royal Navy Mounting Centre at HMS Nelson.

Prior to attending, individuals need to be in date for their RNFT, and normally for NMT104 (two-week Rifle Course), and increasingly for Afghanistan, the NMT109 (three-day Pistol Course).

For the more discrete operational opportunities there are other PDT courses, which cover the use of additional small calibre weapons, foreign weapons, team medic skills, and advanced driving techniques.

Additionally, some jobs require specific employment training – language courses, patrolling techniques, additional driving licence category acquisition, and large-scale live-firing packages.

For those IAs selected for exercises, there is normally little requirement for additional training.

However, for larger, more recognisable ceremonial events such as the November Ceremonies, State Visits and Royal Weddings, there is normally a short period of preparation and rehearsal away from parent units.





# Sharpening the dagger

ROYAL Marine Maj Matt Churchward led his team of landing craft experts from 1 Assault Group Royal Marines on to RFA Mounts Bay to form an Amphibious Operations Cell for Exercise South West Dagger.

The RFA ship was providing amphibious support to HMS Albion during her work-up period (see page 2).

The Bay-class ships offer up an attractive package for amphibious ops, with impressive facilities for carrying troops, vehicles and their kit, alongside large flightdecks and docks to get the

punch of the Royal Marines ashore by helicopter or boat.

To which end, a CH47 Chinook made use of Mount Bay's expansive flightdeck to lift and shift the men of Alpha Company, 40 Commando, into Dartmoor for an aviation assault.

Alpha Company also ran a number of troop-level surface raids using small boats against the fictional dangers of the Plymouth area.

All this was done under the watchful eye of Maj Churchward and his team, whose role as the embarked Amphibious Operations Cell is to provide the vital links across the RFA crew,

embarked military force and the Navy's command platform.

The small team enable the command and control function – which means the RFA can support the complex interlocking movements of the numerous landing craft and helicopters within the Task Group.

The 1AGRM men were bolstered by Royal Naval Reserve watchkeepers, Royal Marine signallers, dock control officers and assault guides from the RFA, alongside specialist staff from the Army's 17 Port and Maritime Regiment.

The Army crew assisted with the delicate

handling of the safe transition of the different vehicles onto the various types of landing craft.

The final phase of Exercise South West Dagger was a company-level assault, once the landing craft of 6 Assault Squadron Royal Marines (Albion's own ASRM) had landed the troops ashore overnight.

● *Top: Royal Marines of Alpha Company, 40 Commando, embark on a Chinook helicopter in Plymouth Sound*

● *Below: a landing craft approaches the dock of RFA Mounts Bay during Exercise South West Dagger*





# 'Worth it in the end'

IF AT first you don't succeed... WO Cris Applegarth, of Navy Command, tells of his struggle to quit smoking:

Having tried every nicotine replacement therapy under the sun, been hypnotised twice, read books and listened to CDs, nothing was working – 22 years of smoking seemed like it was never going to end.

Then someone recommended Champix and I thought: 'What the hell – I've tried everything else, it can't hurt.' I'm glad I did.

Reading the leaflet in the packet was a little daunting. I thought that this was going to be a terrible experience and 'What was I getting myself into?'

The reality was nowhere near as difficult as suggested, but I can understand the need for careful management of the treatment by the Smoking Cessation advisor and medical staff.

The pack says you should set a target date to give up between days 8-14 of the Champix starter pack. At the end of day 13 I thought it best to set my date as the next day...

The feeling for fags had already started to subside and I had started to dislike the taste even more.

Waking the next morning was a weird experience.

Although I thought about smoking – often – it was easy to put it off and get on with something else.

Willpower was still required, but by no means to the extent if I were trying to give up 'cold turkey'. This was almost easy!

There were some minor side effects though.

In the first two weeks I would get a mild headache around lunchtime, but that was easily managed with paracetamol.

Flatulence increased, but as a man, who cares?

Most significant was the disturbance of sleep. Dreams, some of them so weird that I would wake up, were a regular occurrence.

But I did think that if this is the worst, then it's worth it.

Time passed and I kept up the pills.

The habit of going for a cig was difficult to crack and only time can do that, but I was amazed at how quickly I could forget about fags at those times when I'd think 'It would be nice just to have one.'

Visiting the nurse for a chat every couple of weeks is an essential part of the giving-up process, and I can't emphasise enough how much it helps – although, towards the end, you chat about holidays and how much life is better, rather than how giving up tabs is going.

When the end was nearly in sight I had reservations about how I was going to feel when the pills stopped, but was pleasantly surprised that there were no cravings whatsoever.

The habit had gone. Thoughts of smoking pop up very rarely – and usually only for a split second before moving on.

Sleep improved and flatulence decreased, to the relief of Mrs A.

Life moved on and I am now a 'non-smoker'. I think it is important to say 'non-smoker' as



● Big Cig gets the boot off the High Ropes at HMS Collingwood

opposed to 'ex-smoker' as it is a more permanent state.

As every smoker knows, the benefits of giving up smoking always outweigh the negatives.

Most importantly for me, my daughter will not grow up with a Dad who smokes.

My fitness has increased beyond belief – it took a little motivation, but as the weeks passed the lungs started to work again.

Two months after quitting and I passed the 2.4k run in a time of ten minutes flat, 30 seconds quicker than ten years ago.

I have more time to do other things, which strangely makes me less stressed (an excuse for smoking was reduced stress, but smoking caused it by taking away time to 'tab up').

And of course there is more money (I just don't know where). I find it difficult to understand how I could afford £6.40 a day.

Since I gave up my wife has also succeeded using Champix (she had smoked for 15 years) and her side effects were the same as mine.

I will continue on a quest to promote Champix whenever asked how I did.

I can promise anyone who is thinking of giving up, life is better – it's not a walk in the park to get there, but by heck it's worth it in the end. Fantastic."

For the location of your nearest Smoking Cessation Advisor (SCA) contact your Medical Centre or PT Staff.

Alternatively, for more information about quitting, check out [www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk)



● Technicians from 848 Naval Air Squadron, with representatives of the Physical Training and Dental departments show Big Cig what they think of him at Yeovilton  
Picture: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell

# Smoking out the bad guy

YOU have got to admire his tenacity.

Every year Big Cig takes an awful pounding from the Navy, yet he keeps coming back for more.

It's like an addiction...

This year's National No Smoking Day saw establishments staging their own unique attack on Big Cig, both in person and in the form of support to those who want to quit for good.

We start our round-up down in the West Country, where Big Cig came a cropper against the HMS Drake Reggies for 'crimes against health'.

While the RN Police bundled Cig into the back of a van, a team of RN health professionals from Devonport Naval Base toured various locations – including submarine HMS Torbay – offering advice and information on giving up smoking.

LNN Olivia Gracie led the campaign, emphasising that health and fitness were essential for the efficiency and effectiveness of the modern Royal Navy as a military force.

As it happened, Big Cig was portrayed by WO 'Fruity' Paskins, of the Flag Officer Sea Training

organisation, who successfully quit smoking last year with help from the Smoking Cessation initiative.

A similar programme was devised at RN Air Station Yeovilton, where the dental and medical teams joined forces with the physical training staff to help smokers stamp out their habit.

Promotional material was taken to all squadrons and departments. Smoking Cessation Advisors on the station offered counselling and nicotine replacement therapy as well as support throughout the process of giving up smoking.

PO Dental Nurse Nikki Hammill, who organised the event at Yeovilton, said: "I am an ex-smoker and it isn't easy to give up, but it is important to make sure you are ready to quit."

"More than one in five people in the UK smoke, and of those 63 per cent want to stop."

Nikki also had some top tips to help smokers quit, including:

☑ Contact your Medical Centre, Dental Centre or PT instructor for support;

☑ Try Nicotine Replacement Therapy such as patches or gum – it can double your chances of stopping for good. Talk to your GP or pharmacist;

☑ Write down your reasons to stop and stick the list on your fridge to help yourself stay smoke-free;

☑ Talk to family, friends, workmates – support from them is essential. Why not quit together and keep each other motivated?

☑ Chat to other smokers trying to quit and ex-smokers for support on [www.wequit.co.uk](http://www.wequit.co.uk)

As for Big Cig, he was given a good kicking at the Somerset air station (see above).

● Big Cig – aka WO 'Fruity' Paskins – is floored by the Reggies at Devonport Naval Base

Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper



● Big Cig turns up during Divisions on the parade ground at HMS Collingwood  
Picture: Keith Woodland

Further east, and into Hampshire, Big Cig could be seen lurking on the parade ground during Divisions.

The HMS Collingwood event was organised by Civilian Practice Nurse Amanda Bennett, who said: "Even if a person only smokes a handful of cigarettes a day, it is still costing them approximately £44,000 over 22 years."

One of the many activities on offer at Collingwood – as at other establishments – was a device that measured the amount of carbon monoxide poisoning a smoker's system.

The smoking rate across the Royal Navy stands at 19 per cent – lower than the national average of around 26 per cent, and the MOD is committed to helping its staff, whether uniformed or civilian, kick the habit.

Once Big Cig had been chased off the parade ground he was cornered and finally met his match when he was kicked off the High Ropes installation.

No Smoking Day is an annual health awareness campaign, running for almost 30 years, and the military version has been running for 11 years.

# Reservists get German perspective

RESERVISTS from the capital went on the trail of the Bismarck and the U-boat as they traced the history of the Royal Navy's greatest 20th century foes.

On their seventh annual battlefield tour, the part-time sailors of HMS President, London's Royal Naval Reserve unit, headed to northern Germany, onetime seat of power of the Kriegsmarine.

Two dozen reservists joined 'guides' Lts Roddy Urquhart and Tony Scott (aka Scot and Scott Tours) on the three-day trip which began with 48 hours in Hamburg.

Although more a hub of maritime trade than naval base, it was in the great Hanseatic city on the Elbe that many warships – among them the Bismarck – and, during World War 2 especially, countless U-boats were built courtesy of the Blohm & Voss yard.

The world-famous yard continues to build warships for the German Navy to this day, as well as commercial shipping, and

the President men and women were treated to a private tour of the works.

Next stop was Hamburg's impressive new maritime museum in the city's regenerated warehouse district before the tour party made the short trip north to Kiel, home to the German Navy in the Baltic.

In uniform, the reservists were given a tour of a Deutsche Marine minehunter and received several presentations on the modern German Navy.

Then it was across Kiel Bay to the imposing German Naval Memorial at Laboe – the red brick monument towers 235ft over the water and serves as a tribute to the seafaring dead of all nationalities lost in two world wars.

In the shadow of the monument is Type VII C U-boat U955 – one of the class of submarines which was the mainstay of the Battle of the Atlantic between 1939-45.

The reservists toured the vessel, now a museum on the Laboe shoreline, in

company with two engineer officers who served with U-boats from their concrete pens at St Nazaire; they told the Britons they considered themselves extremely lucky to be alive – nearly three in every four U-boat crew were lost during World War 2.

Next a short trip down the coast to Moltentort and the smaller memorial to the U-boat arm – it's more akin to the Royal Navy monuments in Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth. It honours more than 33,000 German submariners killed in the two world wars.

The President sailors laid a wreath as a mark of respect, then were invited to join German U-boat Association veterans for some schnapps and beer.

"Speaking to these German U-boat veterans and honouring those killed on both sides was a moving experience for all concerned – and a fitting end to what proved to be another wonderful battlefield tour," said Lt Scott.



● AB Debbie Willis with two veteran engineer officers in front of a German Type VII U-boat – the type both men operated out of St Nazaire



# where to look

**DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS**  
**10/11:** Director General Human Resources and Corporate Services writes to staff to launch the Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) 2011. Director General Human Resources and Corporate Services, Susan Scholefield, has today written to all MOD civilian staff announcing the launch of a Department-wide Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) for 2011.

**GALAXIES**  
**Galaxy 04-2011:** Continuity of Education Allowances (CEA) – Independent Review Survey

**DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES**  
**DIN 2011 DIN01-056:** Redundancy Compensation Terms for Members of the Armed Forces. Summarises the key features of the Armed Forces Redundancy Scheme 2010, pointing out two recent changes to terms previously published in 2010DIN01-188

**DIN 2011 DIN01-055:** Policy on Naval Command Assignments and Selection Criteria

**DIN 2011 DIN01-054:** BR3 – Issue of December 2010 Edition, superseding PLAGOs and BR 1797. This DIN announces the December 2010 Edition of BR3 (Naval Personnel Management), which makes BR3's planned coverage about 90 per cent complete. The aim of BR3 is threefold: to define Naval personnel management regulations and policy; to explain processes; and to provide guidance.

**DIN 2011 DIN01-050:** Civilian use of Service Physical Training and Sport Facilities. Outlines the regulations regarding the use of Service Sports facilities by MOD civilian employees.

**DIN 2011 DIN01-049:**

Formalising the Process for POAEMs to Transfer to the AET Stream. Summarises the process for PO(AEM)s transferring to PO(AET)

**DIN 2011 DIN01-048:** RN and RM Officers: 2012 Transfer, Promotion and Sea, Air and Command Selection Boards – Instructions to ROs & Administrators. This DIN announces the timings for the 2012 transfer, promotion and sea, air and military command selection board round

**DIN 2011 DIN01-047:** The Command Competencies Framework governing suitability for Sea Command. The revised Command Competency Framework (CCF) sets out the criteria against which suitability for Sea Command will be assessed in the future.

**DIN 2011 DIN01-046:** The Command Qualification One (CQ1) Process and Standards of Training, Certification and Watch Keeping (STCW) 1995. This DIN updates RN policy on the CQ1 process and Warfare Officer compliance with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) convention on STCW 1995.

**ROYAL NAVY TEMPORARY MEMORANDA**

**Issue 03/11 RNTM 041/11:** Warfare Branch – Removal of Annual OPS check as a Pre-Selection Requirement for promotion to LH and PO

**Issue 03/11 RNTM 042/11:** Portsmouth Naval Base – Change of Main Gate

**Issue 03/11 RNTM 047/11:** Get You Home (Seagoers) (GYH(S)) Warrant Journeys – Revised policy for managing entitlement

**Issue 03/11 RNTM 050/11:** HMS Cambeltown Decommissioning & Disposal

**Issue 03/11 RNTM 052/11:** Census 2011: Guidance to

Commissioning Officers & Unit Enumerators

**Issue 03/11 RNTM 053/11:** Extended Career – Optional Exit Points – Submarine Service

**Issue 03/11 RNTM 054/11:** Management of Force Reduction Personnel

**Issue 03/11 RNTM 056/11:** Service Support to the All England Lawn Tennis Championship at Wimbledon 2011

**Issue 03/11 RNTM 057/11:** Open Golf Championship

**Issue 03/11 RNTM 060/11:** RN Ratings – Revised deadlines for SJARS to be finalised on JPA

**Issue 04/11 RNTM 062/11:** Foundation Degree (FdSc) in Maritime Studies

**Issue 04/11 RNTM 063/11:** Management of Repeat Prescriptions and Long Term Medications on RN Afloat Platforms



**THE Naval Families Federation released their latest e-update in March.**

The March edition featured an overview of NFF activities, dates and details on redundancies, including a compensation calculator, and details of a nationwide support programme for families of those deployed in Afghanistan.

The next e-update will be sent out in May.

Join the mailing list by emailing: [info@nff.org.uk](mailto:info@nff.org.uk)



## NOTICEBOARD

### Reunions

APRIL 2011

**HMS Dido Association:** The reunion this year takes place in Bolton from April 29 to May 1 at the Holiday Inn, Bolton. There is a parade, Standard dedication and awards ceremony on the Saturday. Bolton adopted HMS Dido after raising £1.2m during Warship Week to complete and launch her, the relationship has continued since then. For more information contact Colin Bates at [secretary@hms-dido.com](mailto:secretary@hms-dido.com) or tel: 0121 742 8188.

MAY 2011

**HMS Collingwood Association:** Reunion and AGM weekend at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea from May 20 to 23. All members and partners and especially new members welcome. Programme includes dinner and live entertainment every evening, coach shuttle round Portsmouth on Saturday and morning service at St Anne's Church in the Dockyard on Sunday. As always there will be spicers! Visit our website at [www.hmscollingwoodassociation.co.uk](http://www.hmscollingwoodassociation.co.uk) or contact Brian Cox at [briancox9@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:briancox9@blueyonder.co.uk) or write to 8 Colesbourne Road, Cheltenham, GL51 6DL.

**HMS Hood Association:** May 15 at 11.00: Service of Commemoration at St John the Baptist Church, Boldre near Lymington. May 23: AGM at 1600 and 36th Anniversary Reunion dinner 1900 at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth. May 24: 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Denmark Strait off Greenland (1941) in which HMS Hood was sunk in action with the German battleship Bismarck (three survivors of a ship's company of 1,418) there will be an assembly and Memorial Service starting at 1100 at the Royal Naval Memorial on Southsea Common, a reception and buffet lunch at the Queens Hotel will follow. For further details of all these events contact vice chairman Keith Evans on 01428 642122.

**HMS Coventry D118 Association:** Reunion (Falklands Islands era) will take place from May 20 to 22 in the City of Coventry. Full details can be found on the website at <http://www.hmscoventry.co.uk/reunion.php> or contact Chris Howe on 07786 156763.

JUNE 2011

**HMS Blackcap, RNAS Stretton:** Any shipmates or civilian staff who were at Blackcap between 1942-58 are invited to the 23rd annual service of commemoration at St Cross Church, Appleton Thorn on June 5 at 1200. Standards are very welcome. For more information contact Bernie Cohen at [b.cohen2@ntlworld.com](mailto:b.cohen2@ntlworld.com) or tel: 0161 946 1209.

**Service Booking Centre:** If you worked at the Services Booking Centre between December 1985 and January 1991, Jane Rigby (née Newbould) and Steve Holmes are arranging a reunion for colleagues on June 4 from 1pm to 6pm at The William Blake, 174 -180 Old Street, London, EC1V 9BP. They are interested in tracing colleagues, such as MAA George Harvey, MAA Baz Chamberlain, MAA Harry Maguire, Sgt John Hadley RAF, WO2 Roy Sherriff Army, Cpl Nigel Rosier RAF and any other former colleagues Service or civilian that they have not traced yet. Please contact Steve Holmes on 0207 210 5253 for further information.

JULY 2011

**Royal Marine Deal GD Instructors:** A reunion for all General Duties (GD) Branch Instructors who served at RM Deal (the Depot RM) during the 1960's, 70's and 80's, will take place at Walmer & Kingsdown Golf Club on July 9. The format will include a three course meal and entertainment at a cost of £25 per head. Numbers are limited to 80. Guests are welcome. Cheques to 'PTI's Re-union Club, Kent'. This date has been selected to coincide with the annual RM Band concert on Walmer green on Sunday July 10. For further information contact Bill Howie at [billhowie@fsmail.net](mailto:billhowie@fsmail.net) or write to "Calluna" Hawkshill Road, Walmer, Kent CT14 7LN or tel: 01304 375900.

SEPTEMBER 2011

**HMS Tiger Association (C20):** Reunion will take place at the Livermead House Hotel, Torquay from September 30 to October 3. Further information can be obtained from D Andrews on 01262 670860.

**British Pacific & East Indies Fleets & KG5 Associations:** Reunion from September 9 to 11 at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry. Family and friends welcome. Same prices as last year and 'Happy Hour' drink prices. Contact John Grossett on 01943 600588 or Alf Lonsdale on 01293 432049 and for KG5, Jack Kilsby on 01327 703479.

**Electronic Warfare (EW) Branch Reunion Dinner:** The annual EW reunion will take place in the WO&SR's Mess HMS Collingwood on September 23. Open to all former and current serving EW Senior Rates. Further details (TBC) and will be promulgated on the Golly website: <http://www.navygollyies.co.uk> or contact PO Lee Hayward, EW Section, Lewin Building, Maritime Warfare School, HMS Collingwood, Newgate Lane, Fareham, Hants PO14 1AS or tel: 01329 333509, Mil: 93825 3509.

**HMS Unicorn Association:** Our 25th Reunion and AGM is in Plymouth from September 2 to 6. Further details from Patricia Branchley at [pbranchley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pbranchley@hotmail.co.uk) or tel: 01326 315005.

**HMS Repulse Reunion Association:** Are holding their next reunion from September 30 to October 2 at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth. For more information contact Frank Scutt at [fescutt@hotmail.com](mailto:fescutt@hotmail.com), see the website at <http://www.hms-repulse.co.uk> or tel: 01480 393228.

OCTOBER 2011

**HMS Bruce Association:** AGM/Reunion from October 3 to 5 at the Ambassador Hotel, Scarborough. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary Mr D T Heath on 0121 532 4058.

**HMS Llandaff Reunion** takes place at the Britannia Newcastle Airport Hotel, Ponteland, Newcastle-upon-Tyne from October 28 to 31. The invite is open to all ex-Llandaff crew members, family and friends. Please contact Ken Rutherford at [kenneth.rutherford1@ntlworld.com](mailto:kenneth.rutherford1@ntlworld.com) or tel: 0191 534 6641 or visit the website at <http://www.hmsllandaff.co.uk>

**HMS Mauritius (Shore Base):** If you served on the island of Mauritius between 1962-76 you may be interested in the 4th reunion that is being held in the WO, SR & SNCO's Mess at HMS Nelson, Portsmouth on October 8. More information is available from Tina Lowe (née Hills) at [tina.lowe3@ntlworld.com](mailto:tina.lowe3@ntlworld.com) or tel: 01329 843347.

**HMS Morecambe Bay Association:** Seeking D Bright a 'Coder' on HMS Morecambe Bay 1952-53. Come to our reunion in Torquay October 14 to 16. Contact Doug Turk at [doug.turk@ntlworld.com](mailto:doug.turk@ntlworld.com) or tel: 01252 378629.

**HMS Caprice (1968) Association:** Annual Reunion at the Bentley Hotel, Lincoln on October 1-2 with Reunion Dinner on the evening of October 2. If you were aboard HMS Caprice during her memorable world cruise 43 years ago in 1968, and are not already a member of our 83-strong Association, why not join us and meet some of your old shipmates? Contact Graham Latter at [g@latter.karoo.co.uk](mailto:g@latter.karoo.co.uk) or see the website: <http://www.hmscaprice1968.org.uk> or tel/fax: 01482 632276.

**Artificer Apprentices Series 29 (Joined January 1957):** A reunion, probably our last, will be held October 7-8 in Fareham. For details contact Harry 'Dave' Legg at [leggdave@btinternet.com](mailto:leggdave@btinternet.com) or tel: 023 9225 3059 or Sam Wakefield at [sam.swim@](mailto:sam.swim@)

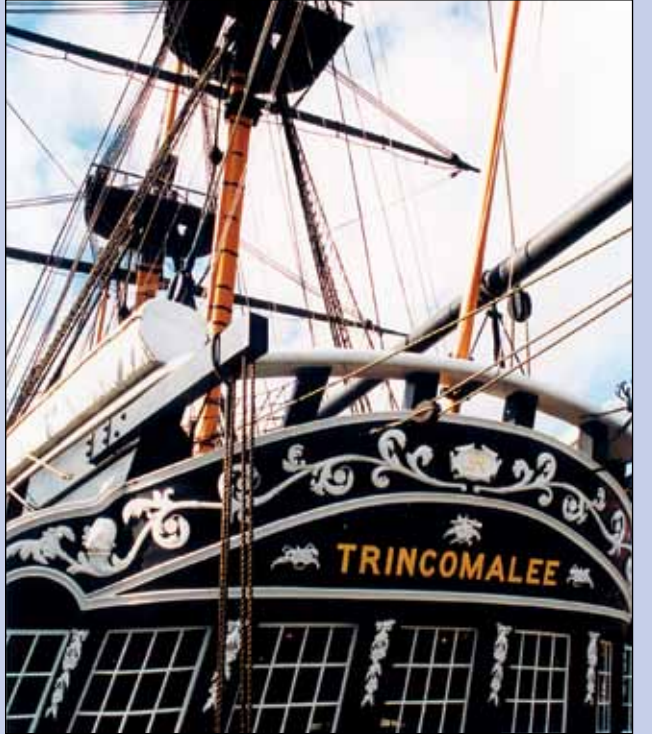
[ntlworld.com](http://ntlworld.com) or tel: 01329 235832.

**HMS Troubridge Association:** Reunion at the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham from October 21 to 23. Forty-six attended the reunion in 2010 which was the largest turn out in the four years we have had a reunion for the last commission. Help to make it even larger this year. For more information contact Bryan Pace at [Bryan@HMSTroubridge.com](mailto:Bryan@HMSTroubridge.com) or see the website at <http://www.HMSTroubridge.com> or write to 665 West Marr Road, Howell, MI 48855, USA.

**Nore Command RNPTIs Association:** Annual function on October 2 in the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent. Open to all. Details from Orlando Jemmett on 01227 263691.

## 1971 1981 1991 2001 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● TS Foudroyant regained her name Trincomalee in 1991

### April 1971

**RUSSIAN** Rear Admiral Vladimir Kruglyakov was piped on board the Tribal-class frigate HMS Eskimo in the small Red Sea port of Massawa, where the ship had joined a gathering of warships from all over the world for a week of social, sporting and nautical events.

The Russian admiral and his interpreter visited Eskimo when she joined ships from the USA, Iran, India, France, Italy and the host country, Ethiopia, to celebrate the graduation of cadets from the Ethiopian Naval Academy.

The highlight of the week was the passing-out parade reviewed by the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, at the Massawa Naval Base.

### April 1981

THE Navy's best-known landmark in Hong Kong, the China Fleet Club, was to be demolished to make way for a commercial development.

The waterfront club was built in 1933-34 with funds contributed by the Admiralty and ratings. It was a six-storey building constructed on piles of Canadian fir driven deep into land leased to the club trustees for 999 years from 1863.

During World War 2 the club became the headquarters of the Royal Navy in Hong Kong. It was occupied by the Japanese when they swept into Hong Kong, and re-established as a naval club in 1945, when there were about 25,000 naval personnel in Hong Kong.

The money raised was used to build the new China Fleet Country Club, which opened in Saltash in 1991.

### April 1991

THE 174-year-old training ship Foudroyant, a familiar sight in Portsmouth Harbour for more than half a century, was to revert to her original name of Trincomalee as she completed her five-year refit to become the centrepiece of a permanent exhibition at Hartlepool Docks.

Trincomalee, believed to be the second oldest ship still afloat (the oldest is USS Constitution in Boston Harbour) was built as a frigate in Bombay in 1817.

In the 1890s she was sold to Reed's of Portsmouth for breaking. However, at roughly the same time TS Foudroyant, once Nelson's flagship and then a private training ship owned by Mr Wheatly Cobb, was wrecked in a storm off Blackpool. Cobb bought up Trincomalee and renamed her to replace his lost vessel.


### April 2001

A TRI-SERVICE project team was looking at a new type of service catering called 'Pay-As-You-Dine.'


Trials were planned for the following year in a select number of establishments to test whether the innovative system would work.

Sailors had complained for some years that the traditional messing system was unfair, as personnel paid whether they ate in the mess or not.

However, there were fears that ending the traditional catering systems might lead to a drop in standards of nutrition, especially for junior rates.



# NAVY NEWS



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Deaths

**Rear Admiral Peter Branson.** Entered Dartmouth aged 14 he was twice torpedoed while still under training, on one occasion surviving five days adrift in a lifeboat off the coast of Africa. After serving in the Far East during the fall of Singapore and Java he undertook his sub-lieutenant courses in Portsmouth and Greenwich 1943. The following year he volunteered for submarines and served until 1950 then reverted to general service when it was found he was suffering from tuberculosis. His first command was Roebuck in 1956 then Rooke (Gibraltar), Phoebe and in Hermes he commanded the task force that evacuated British and other nationals from Cyprus after the 1973 Turkish invasion. He served as naval attaché in Paris and as a rear-admiral he was Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Operations); he retired in 1977. January 1. Aged 86.

**Cdr Nigel Matthews DSC.** Entered Dartmouth 1934. As a cadet and midshipman 1938-40 he trained in Vindictive (Baltic and Mediterranean) and Nelson escorting George VI to Canada; then two years in Aurora on escort duties, evacuating Norwegians and Russians from Spitsbergen and sank the supply ship Belchen. Trained as an observer 1942 and by the end of the year was senior observer with 803 NAS in North Africa in operations against Rommel's Afrika Korps out of Fayid, Egypt. 1943 in Madagascar supporting the Free French then Kenya, Tanganyika and South Africa returning to Britain 1944 by troopship. He then took part in raids on Norway, bombed the German battleship Tirpitz and was wounded by shrapnel during one torpedo attack; he treated himself with morphine but failed to paint 'M' on his forehead and consequently received a second, near fatal, dose when he was lifted from his seat after landing. 1945 as senior observer of 828 NAS he was sitting in the rear cockpit of an Avenger to lead a raid on the Japanese-held island of Truk from the fleet carrier Implacable but with the shortest length of deck his pilot had insufficient power for take-off and his aircraft 'trickled' into the sea directly ahead of the carrier which struck it. Matthews was swept into the wake and was assisted into his liferaft by another crew member but the pilot was hindered by his dinghy, which had not inflated. Matthews cut him free and they were all picked up 20 minutes later by Terpsichore from which he transferred back to Implacable and flew a second sortie that same evening. He was awarded a DSC for his 'determination and eagerness that have been an inspiration and example to others'. He rejoined his squadron near Invergordon and 1946-47 retrained as a pilot and was sent to 827

NAS to fly the Firefly from Triumph in the Mediterranean. After staff courses and desk jobs he commanded Loch Insh seeing service 1958-59 in the Gulf and Indian Ocean. He qualified as a French interpreter in 1961 and served at SHAPE, Paris HQ, before retiring ten years later. December 19. Aged 89.

**Lt Cdr Richard Clive Withinshaw.** Direction Officer. Joined as Boy Seaman RNVr for National Service 1952 and served in Boxer, Fleetwood, Glasgow, Loch Alvie, Victorious, Hermes, Blake and Agincourt. Commanding Officer of Laleston and Brionington and a variety of shore postings including CNOCS, HMCS Stadacona and DNOR. February 16. Aged 76.

**Lt Cdr Geoffrey Cecil Frederick Ancombe.** Joined the RN on his 16th birthday 1941 and trained as an artificer at Raleigh/Fisgard then Drake joining his first ship Cumberland in 1945. Served in Unicorn, Cardigan Bay (Hong Kong and the China Sea), Orion, Venus and Battleaxe then promoted to Acting Commissioned Ordnance Engineer Officer 1955; becoming a Commissioned Officer in 1958. Also served at Vernon and Seahawk, Ensign MOD and Cambridge gunnery training establishment. He served with Verulam until she was paid off before going to Lochinvar; by now a Lieutenant Commander. His final posting was at Ensign preparing materials policy for 'Design for Support' (Weapons Upkeep Bible) and retired 1975 to MOD(N) Bath; finally retiring 1991. Fisgard Association. March 2. Aged 85.

**Lady Margaret 'Midge' Fieldhouse.** Wren Officer at Daedalus. In 1953 she married the man who would later become Admiral of the Fleet and the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse who from the Navy's HQ in Northwood, London, commanded the 1982 mission to recover the Falklands Islands (Operation Corporate). When the Falklands were recaptured, Lady Fieldhouse visited the wounded in hospital and took on an unofficial role comforting servicemen's wives and tried to send somebody to those that lost their husbands before the press arrived. She also headed several charities and after her husband's death at aged 64 in 1992, Lady Fieldhouse continued working to support Naval charities and became a patron of a number of associations including the Submarine Dreadnought Association and HMS Trafalgar Association. She supported several Portsmouth area causes, including the Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue Service and the Gosport Sea Cadets. March 5.

**Lt Cdr Edward Edwards.** Joined as a

Boy Tel at HMS Ganges 1938 and during WW2 served HMS Victory, Fiji, Hawkins, Eggesford, Highflyer, Mercury and Scorpion. He rose through the ranks to CPO Tel and in 1956 was commissioned as a communications officer. His final appointment as a Lieutenant commander was officer in charge at Whitehall Communications centre; retiring 1973. March 3. Aged 87.

**Denis Beasley.** Royal Naval Engineerroom Association and chairman of HMS Sheffield Association. February 14. Aged 86.

**Cyril Bush.** POME. Served 1940-53 in Berwick, LSTs 3019, 163 and 3501, Indomitible, Diadem and Brocklesby. Royal Naval Engineerroom Association. January 10. Aged 90.

**George Neville Campbell 'Riv' Rivington.** Electrical Engineer. WW2 Navy veteran. Senior radar officer and the only Canadian on a British cruiser, he sailed with Kenya in the North and South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Joined the HMCS Uganda in Esquimalt as Senior Radar Officer. Enjoyed many gatherings of the Engineer Wives Association (husbands' auxiliary). February 14. Aged 90.

**Frank Edgar Pritchard.** CPO. Served 1938-70. WW2 Service in Malaya (Atlantic and Mediterranean), Campbelltown (Atlantic and St Nazaire), Argonaut (Arctic Convoys, Mediterranean and Torch Landings), Scourge (Arctic Convoys, D-Day Landings and rescue of Stubbhorn off Norway), Mystic (minesweeping). Post WW2 in Wren, Antic, Rifleman, Striker (Suez), Ark Royal, Malcolm, Carysfort and Glamorgan. St Nazaire Association (Chariotier). January 29. Aged 91.

**Bruce 'Mac' McRae.** AB Sonar. Served in Minerva during the Falklands War also HMY Britannia. November in Florida. Aged 48.

**Charles Edward 'Ted' Pawsey.** CPO Electrical Artificer Fleet Air Arm. Served 1954-78 Fisgard Series 21, in Collingwood, Worthy Down, Lossiemouth, Yeovil, Victorious (892 NAS), Hermes (892 NAS), RNAS Goldcrest (Bradwy), Eagle and Rhyl. January 11. Aged 72.

**Victor Wilson.** CPO Electrician. Served 1944-67 as a Boy at St George then Norfolk, Drake, Defiance, Imperieuse, Raleigh, Vanguard, Ocean, Collingwood, Drake, Cumberland and Carysfort. 8th Destroyer Association. February 4. Aged 83.

**Ridman 'Sonny' Humphrey.** Able Seaman. HO rating volunteer and trained at Raleigh. Served 1943-45 in Norfolk and Devonshire. Veteran of Russian convoys, D-Day and Battle of North Cape; released on medical grounds. February 17. Aged 86.

**Angus Farrage.** CPO. Served in Vanguard, Norfolk, Hart, Cook, Royal Albert, Mounts Bay, Opossum, Alert, Ark Royal and Alعين. HMS Bruce Association. February 10. Aged 79.

**Brian D 'Coffee' Camp.** ERA Boiler Maker. Joined 1951 in Fisgard Series 12. Chatham rating and served 12 years. Mandurah, W. Australia. February 26.

**Peter Grieve.** LAF(O). Served in Unicorn 1942 and a member of the association. January 5. Aged 88.

**George Herdman.** PO EL. Served 1946-60 in Ganges, Illustrious, Vanguard, Defiance, Howe, Drake, Unicorn (1951-54), Orion and Ocean. HMS Unicorn Association. February 2. Aged 80.

**Margaret Easton (née Bouskill).** Became a Wren upon leaving school 1951 and trained as a Dental Surgery Assistant serving at Victory (1951-52) and Pembroke (1952-54); active in Naval amateur dramatics and won many awards for "best actress". She was a nurse to Surgeon Commander Michael Easton RN who later became her husband; she left the RN to marry. When her husband died in 1976 she devoted herself to charitable pursuits, principally King George's Fund for Sailors (KGFS) and for her services was made a Member of the British Empire. March 5. Aged 79.

**George Douglas Alfred Albert Rutland.** AB. Served in Flotilla Leader in Jervis in the Mediterranean and Towy, River-class frigate. January 28. Aged 90.

**John James Frederick Bull.** Able Seaman. Served 1940-45 in Ashanti. Founder and secretary of 10th Destroyer Flotilla 1943-45 Association and Tribal-class Destroyers 1939-45. February 23. Aged 88.

**Victor Wilson.** CPO Electrician. Served in St George, Norfolk, Valiant, Newfoundland, Vanguard, Defiance, Ocean, Collingwood (three times), Cumberland, Drake, Victorious, Carysfort and Whirlwind. 8th Destroyer Squadron Association 2010. February 4. Aged 83.

**ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION**  
**William 'Frank' Knight.** Served in Aisne (1947-48), Hong Kong, Constance (1949-52), MTB 1030 and Gay Fencer (1952-54). Southend-on-Sea branch. December 4. Aged 82.

**Albert 'Bob' Kilpatrick.** Regulating PO.

Served 1943-56 at St George and Spartan (sunk by Glider bomb), St Angelo, Aurora, Drake (seven times), Loch Dunvegan, Loch Veatie, Sea Eagle (three times), Euryalus, Excellent and Tamar. Londonderry branch and RNA funeral with Piper and Branch Standard. February 5. Aged 84.

**Jack Edward Evison.** CPO Aircraft Fitter FAA. Served 1935-49. Initial training at Daedalus then Malta, Bermuda and Norway also Implacable maintaining Swordfish. March RNA. January 30. Aged 91.

**Arnold Russell.** Stoker. Served 1941-46 in Monck and Sainfoin. Trafford branch. February. Aged 88.

**Thomas 'Tom' Gosnell.** AB. Served 1941-46. Coastal forces, Eggesford (Hunt class), Mitcham M&W, RNA Area 1 and Coastal Forces Association. January 4. Aged 86.

**George Oliver.** Ldg Seaman, DEMS Gunner 1940-46. Served in 11 merchant and troop ships including Queen Mary transporting GIs. Hanworth, Middlesex branch. Died on his birthday February 4. Aged 93.

**Ronald William Head.** Chief Stoker. Served for over 30 years from 1950 in Magpie, Protector, Warrior, various sweepers and shore bases. Beccles branch. February 17. Aged 77.

**Leon Monkman.** AB (Navigator's Yeoman). Served 1943-46 in Ganges, Victory, Daedalus, St Vincent, Reading, Pembroke, Tyler, Dryad, Golden Hind, Anson and Formidable. Harrogate & District branch. February 15. Aged 86.

**Lt Gordon Stuart Dear RNVr.** Served 1943-46 in Scylla, Implacable and Finnistere. HMS Implacable Association and Kingston-upon-Thames RNA. February 2. Aged 87.

**Thomas 'Tommy' Howard.** WW2 veteran who served in BYMS and Landing Craft on D-Day. Received an award from the Dutch Government for his contribution to the removal of enemy stores and ordnance in Holland. Founder member and ex-Welfare Officer of Liss & District branch. February 25. Aged 87.

**Bill Wenlock.** Served in escort carrier Shah. A life vice president Wigston & District RNA. February 9.

**Marcus J Cook.** AB Aircraft Handler. Served 1942-46 Chatham division. Hitchin RNA and Essex FAA Association. February. Aged 84.

**Robert 'Bobby' Scott.** FAA. WW2 Service in Campania, USS Albemarle and Goshawk, RNAS Trinidad. Founder member and president Linavady branch. March 8. Aged 86.

**John Kenneth 'Pony' Moore.** L/ REM. Served 1948-55 in Ganges, Bruce (1948-49), Collingwood (1949-50), Indomitable (1950-51), Implacable (1951), Collingwood (1951-53), Highflyer (1953-55) and Newfoundland and Dolphin (1955); enrolled RFR (1955-62). Vice president and former chairman of the Nautical Club, Birmingham. Member of HMS Ganges, the Royal Marines and Birmingham & District RN Associations. February 28. Aged 78.

**Kenneth 'Ken' Bernard Shillitoe.** AB HO rating. Served throughout WW2 mainly in minesweepers and post-war in the Police force. Vice chairman of Dursley & District branch having served as secretary previously for 11 years and two years as chairman also a life member. March 10.

**Mervyn George Hodge.** Served 1950-56 and discharged upon medical grounds. Lydney branch standard bearer for three years and Area 7 standard bearer for six years; also Area 7 Chairman for ten years receiving life membership in 2003; became member of Dursley & District branch in 2009. March 10.

**Cdr Richard Perryman AM RAN.** Served in Jamaica, Comus, Hornet (CO of a FPB), Mercury (Long (C) course), Scarborough, RAN Exchange in AJASS, RNC Greenwich (RN Staff Course) and Staff CinC FES. Transferred to RAN, Fleet Communications Officer, HMAS Harman in command, Deputy Director of Naval Communications Department of Defence (Navy Office) Canberra. Former chairman Canberra branch. March 10 in Canberra. Aged 81.

**Tommy 'Wee Tommy' Stevenson.** Gunner. Joined 1939 at age 17 and served in Dido (Russian convoys), Ulsterman, Indefatigable and various landing craft. Involved in North Africa, Italy and Southern France Landings. City of Glasgow RNA. March 5. Aged 88.

**Peter William Green.** MID. L/S Gunlayer and Shallow Water Diver. Served 1938-54 in Palestine clearing mines and in submarines Upshot, Seraph, Stoic, Sturdy, Sea Devil, Templar and Amphion. Stood by the build and served on the first submarine Astute (diesel-driven). London branch of the Submariners Association, Nuneaton RNA and also the Royal British Legion and Burma Star Association. February 19. Aged 87.

**FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION**  
**Robert 'Bob' Thomas Blanchard.** LAM(O). Served 1952-64 at Lee-on-

Solent Port Division, Illustrious, Bulwark and Albion with 809 Squadron and shore stations Ariel, Sea Eagle and Fulmar. His last two years were spent in Ark Royal. Joined Birmingham branch mid 80s. December 17. Aged 76.

**George Charles Mott.** AF(MW). Served 1943-46 in Formidable (Far East & Australia) and Naval Air Stations Gosling, Raven, Daedalus, Waxwing, Nabstock and Sparrowhawk. Watford branch. January 4.

**Ronald Oldham.** NA1. Served 1943-46 Naval Air Stations Gosling (1943-44), Heron, 787 NAS (1944-45), Daedalus (1945), Sparrowhawk 787 NAS (1945-46), Hornbill 787 NAS (1946). Watford branch. January 10.

**Donald Benstead.** POAM(A). Served 1941-48. Hitchin branch. February 1.

**Albert Merritt.** A/POAM(A) FAA. Served 1947-54. Daedalus branch. 2010.

**Arthur John Wisbey.** POAF(A) FAA. Served 1940-46 at RAF Hedgesford, Trincomalee and RNAS Donibristle, also Hermes (sunk 1942 and transferred to Ukusa) then to RNAS Twatt (Orkneys) to await discharge. Bournemouth & District branch. February 3. Aged 90.

**SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION**  
**James Arthur Moss.** Served at Drake, Dolphin and submarine Tantivy (from completion of his training until 1946). Founder member Runcorn branch. February 8. Aged 84.

**E 'Eric' Crooks.** LEM. Submarine service 1950-55 in Auriga, Alcide and Andrew. Birmingham branch. Aged 80.

**J A C 'Jan' Kiff.** CPO Mech(L). Submarine service 1957-69 in Auriga, Thule, Seascope, Grampus, Resolution and Swiftsure. Exeter branch. Aged 72.

**T 'Tom' Mann.** Tel. Submarine service 1943-46 in Umora, Stygian and Tudor. Hull branch. Aged 89.

**D 'Dave' Montgomery.** EM1. Submarine service 1957-59 in Scorchers. Blackpool branch. Aged 76.

**S K 'Stan' Murray.** Sto.Mech. Submarine service 1945-51 in Achern, Springer, Selene, Saga, Totem, Tradewind, Seadevil and Sentinel. Gatwick branch. Aged 84.

**M 'Mike' Powling.** CPO. Mech1(OE). Submarine service 1968-70 in Resolution. Welsh branch. Aged 72.

**ALGERINES ASSOCIATION**  
**Henry Foster.** AB. Served in Seagull. Associate member. February 6. Aged 84.

**William 'Nip' Frost.** AB. Served in Cadmus. February 15. Aged 85.

**Ron Wayne.** Sto/Mec. Served in Golden Fleece and Flying Fish. February 21. Aged 83.

**Brian Barfoot.** L/Sea. Served in Mariner. February 24. Aged 75.

**Ray Symonds.** Sig. Served in Fancy. February 24. Aged 89.

**Ivor Horton.** Sig. Served in Mandate, Spanker and Rosario. February 27.

**Dudley Paine.** Cook. Served in Plucky. March 3. Aged 81.

**LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION**  
**H Greening.** Served LCT 2076 and LCT Flotilla 102. Devices. December 25.

**J Rose.** Served LCT 973. Halesowen. December 28.

**R S Weir.** Served LCG(L), LCI(L) and LCT. Bristol. February 7.

Diary dates

**JUNE**  
June 18-19, Saturday and Sunday: **Sultan Show**, [www.sultan.org.uk](http://www.sultan.org.uk)  
June 25, Saturday: **Armed Forces Day**, [www.armedforcesday.org.uk](http://www.armedforcesday.org.uk): Events around the country, and main event in Edinburgh  
June 4, Saturday: **Collingwood Open Day**, [www.royal-navy.mod.uk/cwd/penday/index.htm](http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/cwd/penday/index.htm)

**JULY**  
July 9, Saturday: **Yeovilton Air Day**, <http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/operations-and-support/establishments/naval-bases-and-air-stations/rnas-yeovilton/rnas-yeovilton-air-day-2009/>  
July 20, Wednesday: **Culdrose Air Day**

Assignments

Cdr Donald E F Crosbie to Fleet Diving Squadron HQ as CO FDS from September 12.

Talking Navy News goes digital

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email [patn-rec@hotmail.com](mailto:patn-rec@hotmail.com). A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Ask Jack

**WW2 Women Volunteers:** I am studying for an MA in photography at Thames Valley University, London. The project is about Women who volunteered during World War 2. I am hoping that some of them would contact me to discuss their experience and be photographed over a few sessions. The aim of the project is to celebrate these women with photography and present them in my final year exam exhibition. Please contact Rachel Vogeleisen-Davies at [rachel@rachelvogeleisen.com](mailto:rachel@rachelvogeleisen.com) or tel: 07770 697171.

**Radiesthesia/Dowsing:** I am an over-70 researcher trying to find out the extent to which radiesthesia/dowsing has been used in public work, ie the old CEGB, Water Boards, Armed Services or forestry or building industry. If you are an ex Service person who has used dowsing please contact: Michael Haxeltine at [mike.haxeltine@talktalk.net](mailto:mike.haxeltine@talktalk.net) or write to 33 Reading Road, Farnborough GU14 6NH.

**HMS Gloucester, Decommissioning Ceremony:** Former members of HMS Gloucester's ship's company are invited to contact the ship if they are interested in attending Gloucester's decommissioning ceremony on June 30 in the afternoon. Attendance is limited and will be by invitation only. Please submit full current contact details, service number, dates and position served in HMS Gloucester to the ship's decommissioning team by May 6. Invitations will be sent out by May 31. Ship's contact details are: HMS Gloucester, BFPO 289; email: [289-lo@a.dii.mod.uk](mailto:289-lo@a.dii.mod.uk) or [289-poma@a.dii.mod.uk](mailto:289-poma@a.dii.mod.uk).

**HMS Ganges and others:** I am desperate for the whereabouts of Johnny Double, ex HMS Ganges, HMS Glory, HMS Loch Alvie and HMS Afrikander. He would be about 75 now and could have ended up in South Africa. I would really welcome any feedback as to where Johnny might be. Contact Den Glassett at [denisglassett@gmail.com](mailto:denisglassett@gmail.com) or write to 77 Howlett Drive, Hailsham BN27 1QW or tel: 01323 848663.

**The Fast Minelayers Association:** Are looking for old shipmates who served on the six fast minelayers, HMS Abdiel, Latona, Welshman, Ariadne, Manxman and Apollo. If interested in joining please contact Jim Calcraft at [js8441@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:js8441@hotmail.co.uk) or tel: 01562 67822.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, [www.mod.uk](http://www.mod.uk)

Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, [www.royalnavy.mod.uk](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk)

Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, [www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info)

RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, [navysearhpgc@tnt.co.uk](mailto:navysearhpgc@tnt.co.uk)

Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, [www.royal-naval-association.co.uk](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk)

Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, [www.rnmrc.org.uk](http://www.rnmrc.org.uk)

RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), [www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk)

British Legion: 08457 725725, [www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)

Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk)

Seafarers UK: 020 7932 0000, [www.seafarers-uk.org](http://www.seafarers-uk.org)

SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, [www.ssafo.org.uk](http://www.ssafo.org.uk)

RN Community: [www.rncom.mod.uk](http://www.rncom.mod.uk)

Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600

Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, [www.royalnavalmuseum.org](http://www.royalnavalmuseum.org)

Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, [www.fleetairarm.com](http://www.fleetairarm.com)

Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, [www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk](http://www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk)

RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, [www.rnsubmus.co.uk](http://www.rnsubmus.co.uk)

National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, [www.nmm.ac.uk](http://www.nmm.ac.uk)

Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)

Sports lottery

March 12: £5,000 – LH L C Taylor; £1,500 – AB1 J R Stanton; £500 – PO M A Smith.

March 5: £5,000 – Mne D R De Whytall; £1,500 – AB1 C L Wai; £500 – Lt C D Harwood.

February 26: £5,000 – Sgt J Lennon; £1,500 – Lt J M Henton; £500 – Mne L K Thompson.

February 19: £5,000 – PO S A Wilsmore; £1,500 – Mne C U Hamilton; £500 – Capt M F Adams.



Trophy lives



HAVING overrun Belgium early in World War 1, the Germans made use of both Ostend and Zeebrugge as submarine bases where they gave easy access to the British sea lanes.

In 1918 Admiral Sir Roger Keyes planned a combined raid with the intention of blocking both ports; the date for the two attacks was set for April 23 1918.

At Zeebrugge three old minelayers – Intrepid, Iphigenia, and Thetis – were filled with concrete and sunk in the canal and the old cruiser HMS Vindictive landed an assault party of the 4th Royal Marine Battalion and seamen on the port's Long Mole – to ensure their safe disembarkation she was held alongside by two ex-Mersey ferries, the Daffodil and the Iris.

An old submarine, the C3, was used to ram the Mole and sever it, thus preventing the Germans from reinforcing the Mole's defenders while motor launches were used to recover the crews from the three blockships.

The battle on the Mole was ferocious; the attacking ships were seriously damaged, great gallantry was shown by the landing parties and the ships' crews and casualties on both sides were heavy.

Vindictive then moved to Ostend where she was used as a blockship, unfortunately

the other blockships were sunk before they reached their target and Vindictive's bows are still preserved at the port as a War Memorial.

In spite of the bravery of those taking part only limited success was achieved, and both Ostend and Zeebrugge were operational again within 48 hours.

A total of eight Victoria Crosses were awarded following this action, two of which were posthumous; the difficulty of placing one act of courage above another led to some of those awarded being decided by ballot under Rule 13 of the Royal Warrant.

Half of the Marines were casualties and, as a mark of respect to those who fell, the Marines have never since had another 4th Battalion.

The total number of ships employed on this raid was seven cruisers, 28 destroyers, nine monitors, 51 motor launches, one minesweeper, two submarines and 24 coastal motor boats.

After the war, King George V ordered that the two Mersey ferries be renamed Royal Daffodil and Royal Iris; subsequent ferries have perpetuated these distinguished names.

This gallant action is commemorated by **Trophy 10,539**, an oil painting by Charles de Lacy, which shows HMS Vindictive alongside the Long Mole.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: [edit@navynews.co.uk](mailto:edit@navynews.co.uk). If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.

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Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in May's Noticeboard must be received by April 11



# EDUCATION

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## St John's offers a welcome

SITUATED at the heart of Southsea, near to Portsmouth Naval Base, St John's College is an all age co-educational day/boarding school for children of wide abilities.

Recent events at St John's have included a variety of inter-house sporting competitions as well as exciting dance performances, a visit from the author Sophie Mackenzie, victory in the Rotary Club Youth Speaks intermediate competition and the regular Politics Society attended by students, members of the public and addressed by a series of national and local political figures.

The school's next drama production is Moliere's *Tartuffe*, scheduled for the end of March.

It is the warmth and the sense of community which pervades every aspect of school life which marks St John's out, as every pupil is given the opportunity to discover his or her talent, learn new skills and grow in self esteem.

The school has regular open days, the next one is Thursday May 5th and visits with a tour of the school and a meeting with the headmaster are welcome at any time.

In early March the school ran an Options Evening for anyone interested in joining to begin their GCSE courses next September.

Please telephone or email the school for details of these and other events.



● L to R Lt Scott Hamer, Lt Cdr Geraldine Poulet-Bowden RNR, Tim Waters, Alex Turner, Capt James Morley, Jake Broom

## Albion CO visits Trinity

THE commanding officer of HMS Albion, Capt James Morley, visited Trinity School, Teignmouth on March 10 to strengthen further the ship's affiliation with the School's thriving CCF Section.

Trinity has won six Good Schools Guide awards in five years and has been judged as 'Outstanding' in a recent inspection.

Boarders and day pupils both play a prominent role in the

rapidly-growing CCF Section.

Capt Morley and Lt Scott Hamer, the Affiliates' Liaison Officer, were welcomed by Contingent Commander Lt Cdr (CCF) Geraldine Poulet-Bowden RNR and Headmaster, Tim Waters.

A tour of facilities was led by Lt (CCF) Gérard Poulet RNR. Accompanying him were current cox'n and Lord Lieutenant's CCF cadet for Devon, Jake Broom and PO Cds Jack Haworth and Ruairidh MacVeigh, all three of whom are considering careers at sea.

Also present was Alexandra Turner, cadet cox'n at Trinity last year, and who, in her gap year, is "paying something back" by instructing on parade days and attending weekend training.

Alex was presented with one of the first Certificates of Excellence signed by Capt Colin Welborn, Head of CCF RN HQ at Portsmouth, for her sterling work as cox'n for CCF courses held at HMS Raleigh.

Tim Waters said: "Albion has always been a great ship and we are honoured to enjoy such a positive relationship with her."

"Our cadets have hugely appreciated this opportunity to host Capt Morley and Lt Hamer, as a gesture of gratitude for all they have done for the School."



● Adelaide Banyard leading Wellington School's Corps of Drums

## Wellington's Golden girl

FORMER Wellington School pupil Adelaide Banyard is currently studying Ocean Science at Plymouth University and hopes to join the Royal Navy as a Meteorologist.

She travelled to London last October to receive her Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award from the DofE's patron and founder – the Duke of Edinburgh.

The Gold Award Presentation (GAP) is a celebration and recognition of Adelaide's achievements in completing her Gold DofE programme.

The GAP is a unique event and a fitting culmination to mark the hard work, determination and perseverance required.

Adelaide worked tirelessly through the five sections of her DofE programme over 12 months to achieve her Gold Award.

Her diverse activities included:

Physical recreation – fencing  
Skill – playing the flute  
Volunteer work – Drum Major of Wellington School Corps of Drums

Residential – helping to build a school in the Himalayas

Expedition – Brecon Beacons


Throughout her DofE, Adelaide proved to be an excellent leader and organiser, bringing the Wellington School Corps of Drums from ten people to over 40 and raising the funds for new drums.

The Corps has performed under Adelaide's leadership at several events in Somerset and Devon including the Royal British Legion's 2009 Armed Forces Day in Bristol and Remembrance Parades in both Wellington and Taunton.

Adelaide said of her experience: "The Duke of Edinburgh Award helped me find out a lot of things about myself."

"For example I now know if I set myself a goal I know if I put my utmost into it I will reach it."

"It has also taught me to work as a team with newcomers as well as my best friends."





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However West Hill Park is careful not to measure children by academic achievement alone and places real value on the breadth of experience they gain.

Effort, enthusiasm and conduct are highly esteemed and the resulting growth in confidence is the key to unlocking other accomplishments.

Up to Year 5 classes are currently taught in mixed ability groups with differentiation to at least three levels. From Year 6 pupils are streamed into sets for Maths, English and Science. In this way each child's individual strengths and weaknesses are catered for both academically and socially.

Art, Design and Technology, ICT, Music, Dance and Drama all stimulate creativity and imagination.

Boarding (judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding') has to be appealing to children and here boarding is very much based on feeling happy and safe, and having a lot of fun.

There is firm but fair routine, time set aside for study, music practice and quiet relaxation as well as regular fun nights and special weekend activities. West Hill Park offers full, weekly, flexible or a one night boarding experience to suit your family.

## Dover's Duke

THE Duke of York's Royal Military School is a unique full boarding school with a proud 200 year history of educating the children of Armed Forces families.

Located amidst extensive grounds near Dover it combines traditional values, a military ethos and outstanding academic results with modern teaching and sports facilities as well as a new £9.5m sixth form boarding house.

Sports facilities include a swimming pool, gym, running track, rugby and cricket pitches set amidst the Academy's own 150 acre grounds.

The school, which became an Academy last year, will gain additional funding this year to upgrade other boarding houses, ICT and other facilities.

Becoming an Academy has been an historic turning point for the school which will retain its military ethos that fosters leadership, social responsibility and a supportive peer-group community.

Academically the Academy is second to none. Students this year celebrated 100 per cent GCSE pass rate in A\*-C grades (97 per cent including Maths and English) with 86 per cent going on to university.

The Academy boasts an impressive alumni. Many students follow in their parents' footsteps and join the Armed Forces at officer level while becoming leaders within the professions and valued members of their communities.

Students enjoy a high quality of pastoral care and a supportive boarding community among teachers and children who understand military life.

Many of the teachers have previously served in the Armed Forces and students take part in the Cadet Force of their choice under the supervision of a RSM as well as travelling abroad with the Duke of Edinburgh programme.

For more information go to [www.doyrms.com](http://www.doyrms.com)

## Smiling Shebbear

Shebbear College continues in its belief that it is the 'Best Small School in the South West' and is continuing to build on its already impressive infrastructure.

Recent years have seen improvements right across the school.

Not only have all of the school's teaching areas been subject to considerable investment but the addition of a full size all-weather-pitch as well as a professional standard cardiovascular suite; dance studio and weights room, have ensured that the sporting facilities are exceptional.

Work has started on the new build onto the existing Junior School with the addition of an assembly hall, and three new classrooms are due to open in September 2011.

The Kindergarten has been redeveloped and now boasts one of the best facilities in the south-west.

On the music front a new recital room will complement the already successful choir and the music technology lab is benefiting from the addition of 22 new Apple Mac computers for state-of-the-art composition.

The school currently has its highest number of pupils in 18 years and still has waiting lists for some year groups.

Sixth form scholarships and bursaries are available for consideration. Contact Mrs Jacky Rowe on 01409 282001 or [registrar@shebbearcollege.co.uk](mailto:registrar@shebbearcollege.co.uk).

## Appleford is specialist

APPLEFORD School was established in 1988 by two experts in the field: Gerald Trump who founded the first school for dyslexic children in the UK and Dr Peter Gardner, a highly-qualified and experienced psychologist and psychotherapist.

Appleford's aim is to provide a high-quality education for children aged 7 to 14 with dyslexia and associated learning difficulties to include dyscalculia, dyspraxia, ASD and ADHD. To this end the school only accepts children with an appropriate assessment from an Educational Psychologist

and/or a statement of special educational needs.

The school is a co-educational day and boarding school, and warmly welcomes applications from children of families in the Services. The school is approved by the Children's Education Advisory Service.

Appleford encourages a broad and holistic concept of education and aims to provide small classes, individualised and differentiated teaching delivered by well-qualified and experienced teaching and learning support staff.

## Kelly's cadets play havoc

KELLY College, founded by Admiral Kelly in 1877, is proud of its 130 years of service to the Royal Navy.

One of the school's thriving cadet force told firsthand of his experience on Havoc, the damage repair instructional unit at HMS Raleigh, that simulates the experience of a sinking ship with flooding water, movement and smoke effects.

"Last term 11 cadets (pictured right) all voyaged out to Havoc, the Damage Repair Simulator at HMS Raleigh. On arrival we were briefed on what to expect and as we entered the room in the simulator, adrenaline kicked in."

"Sixth Form pupils Chris Barbour and George Harold were the team leaders and had to tell us what to do without doing anything themselves, so everyone was split into two teams ready to get the task done. The sound of an operator informed us to: 'Brace, brace, brace', our ship was going to be hit by missiles."

"All of a sudden the room rocked from side to side and a powerful pipe exploded into the room, we all had to climb down the ladder into the room where we would be working and started covering the gaping holes straight away."

"The water was cold and the rocking of the simulator made the power of the waves strong so it was not easy to get around."

"After 15 minutes, we had all worked together to get the hardest one done and were relieved and pleased when we had finally finished and were allowed to get out of the freezing cold water – we had completed the simulator, agreeing that it was a very exciting experience and one that we would definitely all do again."

And finally, congratulations to Kelly pupils, Molly Limb and Chantal Whitfield who gained their RYA Competent Crew qualifications through the CCF.



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**Tue 5 Apr 11: 1000-1200 RRC Portsmouth, Rodney Block, HMS Nelson.**  
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# Victory Squadron shapes future RN

LAST July the former Phase 2 Training Unit at HMS Collingwood changed its title to Victory Squadron, capturing the inspiration given by Nelson's 'band of brothers' at the heart of modern Naval training.

Within the Maritime Warfare School (MWS) Victory Squadron delivers duty of care and divisional support to Phase 2 Warfare and Weapon Engineering ratings, ensuring they are ready for life in their first sea assignments.

Once trainees have passed basic Naval training at HMS Raleigh they arrive in Victory Squadron, where the staff have to balance a requirement to develop a fighting spirit whilst maintaining an environment conducive to passing exams.

The 300-400 young sailors are led by a team of 27 staff, with Officer in Charge Lt Cdr Joe Wood at the head.

"The staff have worked extensively with developing and implementing our duty of care policy across all Phase 2 training organisations, with one eye on conformity with national law and the other making sure the requirement for maintaining military ethos is not diluted," said Lt Cdr Wood.

This challenging tension is highlighted by the many inspections and audits that the Squadron must pass – even OFSTED, more commonly associated with school inspections, pay regular visits to ensure that naval trainees are mentored and cared for at MWS.

Whilst much effort is devoted to ensure that trainees who graduate are equipped with the right personal and professional skills for the Navy, not all trainees reach the standard – nearly ten per cent do not graduate.

The dedicated Professional Divisional Officers and their divisional Leading Hands thus play a vital role in shaping the future of the RN and take great pride in guiding young sailors along their career pathways.

WO1 ET(WE) Mark Fisher has seen his fair share of sailors pass through the doors of Bryson Hall, the squadron's base.

"Every knock on the door brings a new issue," he said. "You are dealing with real people and their very real issues."

"At the end of the day you can go home feeling that you've made a positive difference to someone's life and career for the better."

The Divisional teams are based around four divisions, each headed by a CPO/WO.

Named after significant battles – Nile, Jutland, Falkland and Matapan – they provide a clear management structure and support to the trainees, with Matapan Division having responsibility for classes or individuals on holdover.

The Divisions all have distinct identities, but a common theme is ensuring that everyone gets the chance to shine professionally – and also have fun.

Last autumn, members of Victory Squadron crewed some of the original small boats that crossed the Channel 70 years ago to evacuate troops from the Dunkirk beaches, and CPO 'Taffy' Blackford trained and led a team of ten trainees for the 94th Nijmegen marches in Holland.

LS(CIS) Downie, recently presented with the Commodore's end of term efficiency award, remarked that "the team ethos, professional development and achievement that Victory Squadron brings is really worthwhile and rewarding."

Cdre Tim Lowe, Commodore MWS, personally graduates as many trainees as possible as he considers the Squadron a critical enabling unit in the MWS.

"They are delivering the future of the Royal Navy," said Cdre Lowe.

FOST Rear Admiral Chris Snow will officially endorse the launch of Victory Squadron next term.



● WO1 Miles Hall RM and WO1 Jon Boreham (centre, front row) with a group of TRiM practitioners from 2RGR in Brunei. (Below) WO1 Dhalindrabahadur Khatri-Chhetri, regimental Sergeant Major for 2RGR

# Navy TRiM team take skills to the Gurkhas

WARRANT Officer 1 Jon Boreham's last job was as Logistic Department Co-ordinator onboard HMS Ark Royal.

During his time onboard he had busied himself with the day-to-day routine of bringing a capital ship out of refit.

But after 18 months it was time to move on to pastures new – albeit sooner than he had planned.

The phone call from the appointer left Jon slightly confused and mystified – he was assigned to the Operational Stress Management (OSM) Cell at Navy Command HQ Portsmouth, taking on the position of Royal Naval TRiM trainer.

"If I'm honest, I had no idea what TRiM was," said Jon.

"I heard it mentioned once in passing but I knew nothing of what it was or offered."

"Some had told me that it was a 'new way of looking after Jack and Jill'."

"I had visions of the scenes from the Hollywood film *The Men Who Stare At Goats* and prepared myself for some mystic experience surrounded by hippy types and incense. Yet another tree-hugging exercise..."

"How wrong could I have been?"

After sitting back and looking more closely at the subject it became clear that this was something Jon already had a limited knowledge about – and indeed had experienced many aspects of traumatic stress.

Jon said: "During my career I, like many others in the Navy, have seen and experienced things that are outside our normal jobs and routines – for example, the gearbox fire on HMS Illustrious in 1986, some time in Sierra Leone, on HMS Marlborough on the gun line during Operation Telic 2."

"Admittedly, these are not the same experiences as our lads and lasses are currently having in Afghanistan, but they still leave vivid memories."

"I also spent quite a few years as a foster parent, and have looked after many children from varied backgrounds and circumstances and have come to realise just how traumatic events in life can come back to you time and again and that we need to deal with it sooner rather than just ignore."

"It's also fair to say that traumatic stress is not just confined to the battlefield."

"Operational Stress

Management (OSM) has become a very important part in the way we now look after our personnel who not only have returned from operational tours, but may have suffered or witnessed a traumatic event whilst serving."

"Trauma Risk Management or TRiM is the process we now use to assess the amount of stress an individual may have suffered."

"It is carried out by the ship or unit's TRiM team and can be used to help with coping strategies and sometimes 'signpost' people to give them the support they may need, helping them settle back into everyday life."

To the Royals, this is nothing new as they have had TRiM since it came about around 1996.

Agencies such as fire brigades, ambulance services and police forces have also adopted TRiM from the Royal Marines model.

Now the Navy is playing catch-up with their Corps counterparts who, due to constant warfighting since its inception, are now recognised as 'market leaders'.

However, the RN has embraced the subject with open arms and it has now become an effective tool for all who use the process, especially as the numbers of Naval personnel deployed to Afghanistan is steadily increasing year on year.

There is a need to recognise that there are many Individual Augmentees (IAs) doing jobs completely outside their normal activities, and are being exposed to situations they would otherwise never witness or experience.

So, as part of the preparations for Herrick 14, the OSM Team at NCHQ Portsmouth has been busy ensuring that the members of 3 Commando Brigade RM are fully prepared for operations.

Joining them in theatre will be the 2nd Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles (2RGR), and as part of their preparations Jon and WO1 Miles Hall RM were given the enviable task of flying out to Brunei to qualify some 57 TRiM Practitioners and ten Team Leaders/Co-ordinators.

The Gurkhas are, without doubt, one of the most respected fighting arms of the British Army.

They have a fearsome reputation for ferocity and loyalty in battle and a special part in the hearts of the British public, and indeed throughout the Commonwealth.

To that end there are few people who wouldn't know what a Gurkha soldier is.

Away from the uniform they are a mild, considerate and gentle



people who have incredibly strong family ethos.

Public shows of emotion are unheard of and only close family are trusted to see the real face of the man.

Unlike most British units, it is not uncommon for fathers, sons, cousins and uncles to be serving within the same battalion, which can produce its own complex stressors – especially if a casualty is suffered.

Armed with this consideration Jon and Miles flew to Brunei for a ten-day training package.

WO1 Hall had also recently arrived in post.

He qualified within the TRiM organisation in 2004 and during Herrick 5 with 42 Commando, and conducted many risk assessments during and post-deployment.

During their instruction to 2 RGR they qualified all Company Sergeant Majors and the RSM.

The courses ran very well with the information being readily accepted and practised.

Initial concerns about the language barrier were immediately removed when one of the young

Gurkhas spotted a grammatical error on the presentation and informed the team that the possessive pronoun should be used to describe one's own feelings...

2RGR's RSM, WO1 Dhalindrabahadur Khatri-Chhetri, said: "In my opinion TRiM allows us to protect and monitor the mental wellbeing of the men of our regiment."

"This new skill gives us the understanding of how we must care for ourselves in the future and whatever challenges lay ahead."

"I am also keen to educate our former Gurkhas in Nepal and the UK about how we now look after their friends and family who are serving."

"I have found TRiM very useful in assisting me in the day to day regimental functions including liaison with our families."

The TRiM model has been supported from the CO down to the Gurkha rifleman, and is seen as a valued resource to manage the operational effectiveness of the men whilst they are deployed on another tour of Afghanistan for 3 Commando Brigade and their friends within the 2 RGR.

Back in the UK, Jon and Miles carried out the validation of 3 Cdo Bde's TRiM Team Leaders and Practitioners in preparation for their deployment to Herrick 14.

Once done, and with the bow wave of Naval training complete, Jon will be getting around all ships and units to carry out continuation training and validation of the teams that are now in place.

If anyone would like any further information on OSM and TRiM, contact the team at NCHQ, Whale Island, tel 93832 5962 (mil), 02392 625962 (civ), email [DI\(F\) Group FLEET-TRiMTEAMMAILBOX@mod.uk](mailto:DI(F) Group FLEET-TRiMTEAMMAILBOX@mod.uk)

# Caledonia under new ownership

HMS CALEDONIA is under new ownership – but it's business as usual at the Scottish establishment.

From the first of this month the site will be known as MOD Caledonia as part of the newly-announced Defence Infrastructure Organisation, formerly Defence Estates.

The establishment, on the north bank of the River Forth, is primarily used to support Royal Navy ships in refit at Rosyth dockyard.

It is also a home to more than 20 lodger units, including the Naval Regional Commander for Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Royal Marines Band Scotland, the headquarters of the Northern Area Sea Cadets, the Royal Naval Acquaint Centre, an RAF Police unit and the local Air Cadets.

The construction of the two new Queen Elizabeth-

# Ops Room is brought back to life

THE Operations Room on board HMS Belfast is to be brought to life to give visitors a glimpse of life on board the light cruiser 50 years ago.

The newly-restored room was the nerve centre and brain of the ship.

And visitors will now be immersed in the sights and sounds of Pony Express, a major exercise from 1961 in which Belfast played a leading role.

Members of the public can play their part in controlling a fleet of ships and a salvage operation after an aircraft comes down in the sea.

The real Pony Express was a large-scale amphibious landing exercise, involving the UK, USA and Australia, involving 60 ships and 26,000 personnel off North Borneo.

Individuals and small groups can take over a plotting table and make decisions about the ship which will trigger a range of effects such as helicopters landing on board.

The restoration of the room was supported by the DCMS Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund.

For more details of the Ops Room, opening times and admission prices see the ship's website <http://hmsbelfast.iwm.org.uk/>

# Robots rule at Chatham

ROBOTS will be running amok in No1 The Smithery at Chatham Historic Dockyard this month.

From the Terminator to Sonny, star of *I Robot*, a new exhibition looks at various forms of the metal men (and women), be they robots, cyborgs or androids, real or imaginary, whole or in pieces.

'Robot' runs from April 4 to June 17 and is included in normal admission prices for the dockyard.

In addition there will be themed activities for families over the school holidays, April 9-23, April 29-May 2 and May 28-June 5.

'Riveting Robots' continues the mechanoid idea, with workshops in which there are robots to be made, art and craft activities and prizes to win in robot-themed party games, even obstacles to be overcome with radio-controlled robots.

Chatham also hosts the popular Medway Festival of Steam and Transport on April 24-25, featuring historic transport in various guises.

Separate tickets must be obtained for this weekend – for details of this and other events see the dockyard website at [www.thedockyard.co.uk](http://www.thedockyard.co.uk)

# 771 NAS covered

THE latest cover from the RN Philatelic Society will be on 771 NAS Search and Rescue – and will be launched, appropriately, on May Day.

There will be three signed and three unsigned versions of this limited edition cover – the signatures are those of senior personnel from the current squadron, based at Culdrose.

Further details from the RN Philatelic Society, 19 College Road, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LJ or email [enquiries@rnphilatelic.org](mailto:enquiries@rnphilatelic.org)

class aircraft carriers at the site means the Navy will continue to provide the focus of activities for the foreseeable future, although there will still be a drift towards tri-Service diversity.

The new Head of Establishment, David Jack, was due to take over from outgoing CO Cdr David Pickthall as *Navy News* went to press.

And the handover was scheduled to take place on April 1, exactly 15 years since Caledonia assumed her latest role from HMS Cochrane.

Caledonia's links with the area date back to 1891 when a ship of that name was berthed near the Forth Bridge as a training vessel.

The name was transferred to a new shore establishment in 1939, but the name changed to HMS Cochrane in 1985.



## Royalist accident safety pledge

THE parent body of the Sea Cadets has pledged to never rest from seeking to improve safety when offering challenges to youngsters.

The promise, from Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC) Chief Executive Martin Coles, came in response to the findings of an investigation into the death of 14-year-old cadet Jonathan Martin, of Ashford unit, who fell from the yard of sail training ship TS Royalist in the Solent on May 2 last year.

The two-masted sailing ship was at anchor in the Stokes Bay area, having taken part in a Cadet 150 activity at Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth, and Jonathan was helping his fellow cadets stow a sail when he fell eight metres, struck the ship's gunwale and went into the sea.

He was quickly recovered from the water and flown to hospital but died as a result of his injuries.

The report, by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB), found Jonathan had unclipped his safety harness to help other cadets, and highlighted concerns about the supervision of cadets while aloft and the suitability of the belt harnesses.

Recommendations have been made to the MSSC and the Royal Navy aimed at improving the safety of cadets by addressing the safety issues identified and through the development of assurance procedures, to ensure that the risks to cadets participating in this challenging, but potentially dangerous activity, are reduced to and kept as low as reasonably practicable.

Mr Coles said: "The MSSC is deeply saddened by the death of Cadet Jonathan Martin in an accident while on board our tall ship TS Royalist."

"The thoughts of the Trustees and all members of the charity continue to be with Jonathan's family and the members of his Sea Cadet unit."

"The safety of our staff, volunteers and cadets, in equal measure, is paramount to the charity, as evidenced by the 30,000 cadets who have sailed on TS Royalist over the last 39 years without similar incident."

We fully recognise the importance of never resting in seeking continual improvement in the safety regimes across all our operations, as we seek to help young people develop valuable life skills through a range of adventurous activities, including on board TS Royalist.

"We therefore welcome the MAIB's recommendations."

"With the support of the Royal Navy we will ensure that these are fully reflected in all that we do."



● A replica gun carriage, made by Colin Norris and his grandson Phillip, was handed over to the Commanding Officer of Bury and Radcliffe unit, S/Lt Jones, at TS Scorpion. The gun carriage is a full-scale replica and it took Colin and Phillip 148 man-hours to make. The gun carriage will be the 'signature' of TS Scorpion and will get its first public airing at the Bury Carnival on Saturday June 11

# TS Tiger welcomes Captain Sea Cadets

CHIPPENHAM unit welcomed the Captain Sea Cadets to TS Tiger to show him what the cadets have learned – and earned praise from the Naval officer.

Capt Mark Windsor toured the unit with Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Barry Archer RNR, seeing the various activities carried out at the headquarters, situated on the southern bank of the Bristol Avon.

In the Mechanical Engineering class he watched as cadets worked on a boat engine, hands protected from the oil by gloves.

In the Junior Cadets class, Capt Windsor was treated to a 'witch's brew' – a concoction of Coca Cola and vanilla ice cream, topped with jelly sweets, which the guest said tasted better than it looked.

During a workbook class Capt Windsor listened to cadets describing the role of the Royal Navy in policing the seas to reduce incidents of piracy and drug-smuggling.

Capt Windsor spoke of the bravery and professionalism of Navy crews and of the Royal Marines.

During a discussion on the role of Royal Navy medical staff,



● Capt Mark Windsor (left) attends a Mechanical Engineering class at TS Tiger

Capt Windsor highlighted the importance of cadets knowing first aid, and went on to describe the vital role played by RN medics in a range of scenarios.

At Evening Colours the visitor presented Junior Cadet Allen with a six months service star.

There has been a Sea Cadet

presence in Chippenham since the 1940s.

Close links are also maintained with the Royal British Legion.

The Mayor of Chippenham is the president of TS Tiger, and has often spoken of her pride in being so.

The unit has 40 cadets, aged ten

to 18, and enjoys strong links with the community – the marching band and guard is often called upon to attend community events.

The RN has a presence at the Defence Communication Services Agency (DCSA) HQ at nearby Corsham which is linked to the unit.

## Has any unit seen missing sailor?

CAN you help a Sea Cadet unit track down a missing sailor?

He is fairly distinctive – he is armed with a cutlass, stands nearly 2ft tall, and is silver in appearance...

The statuette, on a wooden plinth, was won by Burton unit more than 40 years ago, but disappeared soon after, and the unit's president wonders if anyone knows where it went.

"In 1970 the Sea Cadet Corps initiated a new adventure training competition for an unusual and enterprising activity outside the normal SCC training programme," said Cdr Keith Hornby Priestnall RNR.

"At that time our Marine Cadet Detachment was only in its second year and so, with their OC, I arranged a full day's exercise as an underground rescue operation in one of the supposed 'collapsed' working tunnels of the famous local gypsum mines – gypsum water is the secret of Burton's world-famous beers."

"We had the full co-operation of the owners, which we surely needed as we encountered several unforeseen major difficulties!"

"Quite an achievement."

"It was with immense pride that we won this national competition and subsequently received the unexpected and most elegant huge trophy of any event previously received by our unit."

"Nearly 2ft tall, it was a splendid silver model of a sailor complete with cutlass on a solid wooden base – presumably he was a boarding party member."

"It toured on display in our town shops with immense pride for Burton."

"The trophy had its own specially-designed wooden trunk, and cost a fortune to return in January 1971."

"The competition was to be held annually, and in 1973 I decided we would have another go, but was told that the trophy would not be available as it couldn't be found or had not been returned."

"Presumably it had been stolen – but if that is the case it's hardly a trophy to be hidden away, so someone somewhere knows about it."

"Sadly, Sea Cadet HQ has no idea who won this trophy in 1971, 72 or 73."

"So can anyone help with my quest? The trophy was, I think, called the Nelson Trophy, and once seen is never forgotten."

"Do any older SCC readers, or any of the SCC Area or District Officers, or anyone serving on a present unit, have some clue as to its present whereabouts?"

"It is too good a gift to go AWOL."

If you can help, contact Keith at [Bdi4keith@aol.com](mailto:Bdi4keith@aol.com)

## Scarborough stars rewarded



FRIENDS, families and guests gathered at the Scarborough Sea Cadet headquarters on East Sandgate for the unit's annual presentation evening.

Among the honoured guests were the Mayor of the town, Cllr Hazel Lynskey, and Mayoress Sheila Kettlewell.

Also present to award trophies were unit president Fred Normandale, past vice chairman Ian Hamilton and chairman Fay Roberts.

A number of trophies were awarded, including Cdt Stephen Gaines winning the Sportsman of the Year title for his sterling efforts in the 150th anniversary sports event in Leeds.

Mayor Hazel Lynskey presented Cdt Holmes with the trophy for best turned-out cadet.

The most coveted trophy of all went to Cdt Christine Penrose, the unit's latest Cadet of the Year.

And the candidates for the trophy awarded to the cadet who had constantly volunteered and put themselves forward in support of the unit were so difficult to separate that the prize was shared amongst four cadets.

● Scarborough unit chairman Fay Roberts presents the Cadet of the Year trophy to Cdt Christine Penrose



● Robbie D and Diane Campbell of CFM local radio in Cumbria visited Workington unit to present them with two new Trinity 500 boats and equipment, including buoyancy aids. Looking on were the Commanding Officer of TS Vanguard, Lt Cdr (SCC) Anthony Holliday RNR, Boats Officer PO (SCC) Wilson Matear and Pulling Instructor PPO (SCC) Michael Lee along with cadet coxswains AB Matthew Emerson and MC2 Ryan Lawson





## Picture yourself as a winner...

FANCY taking part in one of the top photography competitions in the UK – and possibly winning an offshore voyage?

Each year the RN recognises excellence in photography by hosting the Peregrine Awards – and this year they have created a special category for Sea Cadets.

To take part you need to be a serving Sea Cadet aged between 13 and 18.

For a chance to win and attend the awards ceremony in London you should read and conform to the entry requirements which can be downloaded from [www.sccheadquarters.com](http://www.sccheadquarters.com)

And don't hang about – the deadline for submitting your entry is May 20.

Two images will be picked out – an overall winner and a highly commended.

The overall winner's image will be shown in the RN photographic exhibition and will appear on the Sea Cadets UK website home page.

The winning cadet will attend the awards ceremony in London and win an offshore voyage.

The cadet behind the highly commended image will receive a Royal Navy Awards certificate and the image will be used on the Sea Cadet UK website and Sea Cadets Facebook page.

Sea Cadet HQ will cover the travel and accommodation costs for the overall winner and their parent to attend the awards ceremony in London.

## Dinner with Shipwrights

CADETS from Southwark, Hornchurch and Walton on the Naze units combined to attend the Shipwright's Admissions Dinner at historic Stationers Hall in the heart of the City of London.

Each cadet received an award of a bursary for a week's cruise aboard the tall ship TS Royalist, generously provided for seven London Area cadets each year.

Helping them to feel at ease while carrying out their duties was ex-London Area Officer (and previously ex-Northern Area Officer) Lt Col Andy Milne RM who, after completing his distinguished service with the Royal Marines, is now Clerk to the Company.

## Stonehaven success

STONEHAVEN and District unit have honoured the cadets' achievements at their annual awards ceremony, held at the High Street headquarters.

The presentations were made by Lt Michael Hutchison RN, Commanding Officer of TS Carron's affiliated ship, HMS Archer.

The main prize-winners were:  
 16-18 Years: POC Michael Smith;  
 14-16 Years: LC Michael Blacklaw;  
 12-14 Years: OC Dylan Coolahan;  
 10-12 Years: LJC Emily



● A GROUP of 40 cadets and staff from Taunton School CCF visited 815 Naval Air Squadron at RN Air Station Yeovilton where they spent an afternoon with the largest helicopter squadron in the world. Hosted by Lt Craig Farquharson, the cadets were taken to the squadron hangar on arrival and given a short brief on the Lynx Mk8 SRU (SATURN Radio Upgrade) after which they could explore the aircraft, which resulted in many questions for the aircrew. After a thoroughly enjoyable and interesting afternoon the cadets posed in front of a Lynx for the all-important picture (above) before returning to school

Picture: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan, RNAS Yeovilton

# Unit supports safety scheme

TEIGNMOUTH unit has signed up to a pioneering patrol initiative with the local harbour master to promote safety on the water.

The cadets are working with the Teignmouth Harbour Commission (THC), supported by the police, to give an emergency response under the Harbour Authorities Emergency Safety Plan.

As their part of the deal, the cadets will be prominent around the River Teign and the town harbour to deliver a community safety message to boat owners, users of the estuary, holiday makers and young people using the river and harbour – all part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award

scheme endeavours.

For the past 12 months the unit has been fundraising to buy and refurbish four rigid inflatable powerboats or dories, putting in a great deal of effort to bring them up to the required standard for safety boat work.

The project also benefited from the award of a £10,000 Awards for All lottery grant which paid for new engines, training volunteers to Royal Yachting Association safety levels, personal protection and safety kit.

The initiative starts on May 2, when 14 volunteers from the unit will carry out Community Safety Patrols on the river and estuary under the authority of the Teignmouth Harbour Master.

The volunteers, many of whom were or are still serving members of the Armed Forces and the emergency services, will be sworn in as harbour assistants.

The community safety messages delivered by these volunteers will be on safe use of the water and

slipways, harbour byelaws, crime prevention and marine safety.

As part of their Duke of Edinburgh and Public Service Diplomas, cadets will also deliver these key safety messages through handing out leaflets, talking in schools, and giving presentations.

During the summer cadets will be stationed at the harbour's Polly Steps, offering visitors vital information about local marine safety.

At the same time the youngsters will also undertake marine training on boats and yachts within the Teignmouth Harbour area as part of the Sea Cadet training syllabus, it is intended to ensure as many children as possible will have the opportunity to be involved, particularly out of school hours and during the school holidays.

The unit and its partners in this venture believe it is a prime example of the kind of initiative sought by the Government under the umbrella of the Big Society.

## Top role for Bradley

A CADET from Hornchurch and Upminster unit has been chosen for a prestigious role in London ceremonial life.

POC Bradley Baker is one of three cadets chosen to accompany the Lord Lieutenant of Greater London for the year, playing a high-profile role in such public events as royal visits and civic ceremonies.

Nominating Officer Staff Lt Sarah Butcher said: "POC

Baker is a dedicated, mature and thoroughly reliable individual.

"He is passionate and knowledgeable about the Sea Cadets and is a highly-likeable and adaptable person who will be an excellent ambassador for the Sea Cadet Corps."

"POC Baker said: "I have achieved a lot within my Sea Cadet career but being nominated and selected has been the best moment in cadets for me."

## Tireless efforts rewarded

BECKENHAM and Dulwich unit has been awarded the Indefatigable Cup as the Sea Cadet unit which improved most during 2010.

The South London unit made sustained progress throughout the period, its cadets making the most of an effective training programme and also pitting the reputation of TS Sikh against other units and districts in various events up to Area level.

This has required a huge effort and plenty of commitment on the part of staff and cadets, and unit chiefs say they thoroughly deserve the accolade.

The cup – once the Merseyside Navy League Swimming Gala trophy – is so valuable that it spends most of its time locked away at the old Indefatigable School (JSMTC), and is usually only brought out

for the presentation; the winning unit also receives a shield which it can keep.

Col Bill O'Leary, chairman of the Indefatigable Old Boys Association, was due to travel to the Beckenham and Dulwich unit as *Navy News* went to press to present the trophy and an accompanying cheque to S/Lt (SCC) George Tolley RNR, the Commanding Officer of the unit.

Beckenham and Dulwich unit stakes a claim to be the second oldest unit in the country, with a history which is documented as far back as 1913.

The unit has been merged several times with neighbouring outfits, and is thought to have started out with the rather cumbersome moniker of Dulwich, Crystal Palace and Lambeth unit.

## Itinerant volumes

FORGET *Moby Dick* or *The Cruel Sea* – the most popular book ever read by seafarers is apparently *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

That is one of the findings of a scan through the reading lists of one of the oldest ships' libraries in the world, run by the Marine Society – parent organisation of the Sea Cadets.

The Society has run a ships' library service since 1920, and dispatched 40,332 books last year.

A Marine Society library book will have travelled, on average, twice around the world – 50,000 miles.

Book services manager Mark Jackson said: "We know better than anyone else what seafarers like to read, and last year dispatched 346 libraries to 319 vessels and 27 installations worldwide."

As World Book Day was celebrated in early March, the charity was preparing to send out a new batch of titles across the globe, from depots in Rotterdam, Fujairah, Singapore and Hong Kong.

There are 150,000 books in the exchange library, with 5,000 a year being added to replenish the stock.

Books remain on board a ship for four to six months.



● Cadets Penrose, Todd and Burroughs serving pancakes at Scarborough

## Shrovetide efforts rake in the money

SCARBOROUGH unit opened its doors to the public on Shrove Tuesday to serve pancakes and refreshments throughout the afternoon.

Shrove Tuesday – or Pancake Day – is a unique and special day in the Yorkshire seaside town's calendar, as children are given the afternoon off from school.

The South Foreshore road is closed to traffic and hundreds of children (and grown-ups) bring their skipping ropes and spend the afternoon skipping, a tradition that dates back many years.

Fortunately the weather could not have been better, and the unit did a roaring trade, taking £211 on the tombola and £601 on the sale of pancakes and refreshments.

Parents and instructors worked hard behind the scenes while the cadets did a first-class job serving the tables.

Scarborough's Shrovetide celebrations, along the foreshore of South Bay, draws big crowds.

As long ago as 1853 townspeople gathered there to celebrate 'Ball Day' when various ball games were played – a local variation of the historic football games played in other parts of the country.

It was one of the few public holidays when apprentices and servants could be sure of having at least half a day to enjoy themselves.

The name Ball Day continued until the turn of the century and it was recorded in 1903 that 'a few bairns were skipping near the lifeboat', but by 1927 – in a national publicity campaign – it was acclaimed as 'Scarborough's Skipping Festival'.

At the end of the 19th century the South Foreshore on Shrove Tuesday was like a fairground.

Stalls were arranged on the seafront offering gingerbread, liquorice, coconuts, and similar delicacies, and a contemporary account tells of "baskets and balls of various qualities and colours were prominent too, and battledores and shuttlecocks were bought even by men and women."

"On this day grown-up folks can skip and play without being thought childish."

"Everyone becomes something different from their usual selves on Shrove Tuesday."

The other custom which is still retained in the town is the ringing of the Pancake Bell.

Over a century ago the bell used to hang in St Thomas' Hospital in North Street, and was used as a curfew signal at 6am and 6pm.

On Shrove Tuesday, however, it was rung at noon as a signal to housewives to start frying the traditional pancakes.

With the demolition of the hospital the bell was removed to the Rotunda Museum in 1861 where it continued to be rung for the next 50 years.

When age made it unsafe, a ship's bell, presented to the Rotunda in 1979 to mark its 150th anniversary, was substituted. A new replica Pancake Bell was installed at 86 Newborough in 1996.



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Visit [sea-cadets.org](http://sea-cadets.org) or call 020 7654 7000

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313013 and in Scotland SC037808





● LC Nicholas Gibbs, Acting PO (SCC) Simon Spillings and POC Sam Shaw, of Beccles unit

## Triple delight at Beccles

BECCLES has again taken to the limelight with the announcement of three prestigious awards going to members of the unit.

POC Sam Shaw has been named the Navy Board cadet for Eastern Area – an award given to one cadet out of 61 units in the East of England region.

Sam will represent his fellow cadets at a number of high-profile events during the year.

LC Nicholas Gibbs has been chosen as the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Suffolk for 2011.

This honour is given to a member of each of the Cadet Forces in Suffolk and the chosen cadets will escort the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk to formal functions throughout the year.

And last but not least, Acting PO (SCC) Simon Spillings has completed, and will soon be visiting Buckingham Palace to collect, his Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

After many months of hard work and dedication, this prestigious award demonstrates the range of activities offered by the Corps.

CO Lt Cdr (SCC) Joe Meadows RNR, said he was extremely pleased with these achievements and would encourage all Cadets to strive to attain as much as possible that the Corps has to offer.

Beccles cadets have also picked up qualifications in the PT field – two weekends of training at RAF Bampton led to PT Aptitude and, for some, their PT Third Class.

Special thanks to unit PT instructor PO (SCC) Cannon, for ferrying cadets to and fro.



● Junior Cadet Nugent flips pancakes with Cdr John Rees, Lt Cdr (SCC) W Alan Thomas RNR, Lt Cdr (SCC) Mike Hulonce RNR and Cllr Dyfrig Thomas

## Parade inspection is a flippin' good night

LLANELLI unit's biannual RN Parade inspection was a little flat – but in the best possible way.

Because the big night happened to fall on Shrove Tuesday, which gave cadets and guests alike the chance to flip the odd pancake.

Cdr John Rees, South West Area Officer, Lt Cdr (SCC) W Alan Thomas RNR, West Wales District Officer, and Lt Cdr (SCC) Mike Hulonce RNR, West Wales Deputy District Officer all attended, as did members of Llanelli Town, Rural and Carmarthenshire Councils, including the Town Mayor Cllr

PENZANCE unit cut a swathe through the trophies at the annual Cornwall District Drill and Piping competition held in HMS Raleigh.

It was a tough competition with the Unarmed Drill Squad competing against a squad from Falmouth.

Penzance won all the trophies available – Best Squad, Best Dressed Squad and the Best Squad Commander, which went to AC Rebecca James, who led her team to a very convincing victory.

The Penzance piping team also had a very good competition, which included the Best Piping Team and the Best Dressed Piping Team.

OC Brogan Pryor won Best Dressed Cadet, and was the runner-up in the Best Individual Piping.

Penzance now goes on to represent Cornwall at the South West Area Competition, which was due to take place at HMS Raleigh as *Navy News* went to press.

The Commanding Officer of Penzance unit, S/Lt Mike



● The Penzance unit Drill Squad in action at the District Drill and Piping competition at HMS Raleigh

O'Sullivan, said: "I am very proud of the commitment and dedication shown by the drill and piping teams and I would like to thank POs Matt Bird and Rob James,

who have trained the teams.

"I know myself and the chairperson, Dr Paddy Hicks, would also like to thank the rest of the staff and cadets in TS

Grenville – it really was a team effort."

For more information about Penzance Sea Cadets see <http://units.ms-sc.org/penzance>

## Dunbar flags up a year of achievement

DUNBAR unit has achieved a Pennant – a Sea Cadet efficiency award – which is testament to the hard work of PO Kaszuba, his staff and the cadets themselves.

TS Valiant has seen a very busy year, with good staffing levels and well-maintained boats helping cadets achieve expertise in various aspects of seamanship.

As well as offshore courses cadets have skied in Scotland, attended summer camps and taken part in fundraising events.

PO Kaszuba and Unit Management Committee chairman Jim Dow were present at the Queen's garden party at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh.

Members of the unit, including families, enjoyed an interesting visit to the Royal Yacht at Leith,

hearing tales and memories from members of staff who had been on the ship when she was in service.

TS Valiant now has one of the new Trinity 500 pulling boats, and is looking forward to the boating season – the unit also hopes to buy three Pico sailing dinghies.

Sophie Kaszubal, aged 14, won the Cadet of the Year award while 11-year-old Francesca Hanmer was judged to be the Junior Cadet of the Year.

The cadets have also passed on their congratulations to David Knox, who was recognised as Carer of the Year by brain injury charity Headway.

David has served as both a staff member and cadet at TS Valiant, and now serves on the Unit Management Committee.



● Junior Cadet of the Year Francesca Hanmer (left) and Cadet of the Year Sophie Kaszuba with Dunbar unit CO PO Michael Kaszuba

## Generous captain behind the wheels

QUEENSFERRY unit received a welcome surprise in the form of a new minibus, donated to the cadets by Capt Andrew Shearer MN.

The unit has suffered over the winter months as their ageing minibus struggled to cope with both the hard weather and increased numbers of cadets.

Capt Shearer came to the rescue with the donation of a new 15-seat minibus to complement the existing bus.

The unit is now able to run both buses, which will provide much needed transport capacity – some 96 staff and cadets are now signed up to TS Lochinvar.

Capt Shearer is the captain of the 200,000-ton MV Dapeng Moon, one of BP's newest and largest Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) ships, which normally sails between China and Australia.

However, when home on leave the Captain is not only a very active instructor at the unit, teaching seamanship, navigation, meteorology, leadership and archery, but is also a great patron, donating time, money and skills.

In the past as well as generous donations of equipment he has single handedly designed and built a new uniform stores facility within the unit, which allows the unit to issue each and every cadet with uniforms and equipment needed for every occasion.



● Capt Andrew Shearer MN (left) hands over the minibus to Lt (SCC) Colin Butcher RNR, Commanding Officer of Queensferry unit  
Picture: CPO (SCC) Ian Nelson

Queensferry's CO, Lt (SCC) Colin Butcher RNR, said "Having Capt Shearer onboard is outstanding in so many ways.

"He is a great influence on

the cadets and brings experience and knowledge which is second-to-none.

"His numerous donations make a real difference to the



● POC Zoe Jones

## Chiltern celebrates appointment

CHILTERN unit is celebrating the appointment of POC Zoe Jones as Southern Area Navy Board Cadet for this year.

There are some 2,500 Sea Cadets in the area, from which Cdr Andy Giles RN, the Southern Area Officer, had to choose one outstanding candidate.

Zoe joined Chiltern unit, which is based in Chesham, in 2003 as a Junior Sea Cadet and rose through the ranks to POC.

Along the way she attained her Seamanship First Class and Cadet Drill Instructor qualifications, as well as that for Sail Offshore Watch Leader on TS Royalist, the Sea Cadets' sailing brig and flagship.

Zoe has also picked up qualifications in various subjects and specialisations, including the Frimley Park Cadet Leadership Course, a BTEC in Public Services, the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award and Royal Yachting Association Level 2 Power, Planing and Displacement.

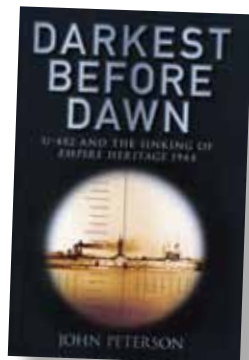
Whilst attaining all this Zoe was a key team member for the 2010 Hong Kong Exchange.

Zoe has also been an excellent role model to younger cadets, stepping up to teach and assist the cadets when required and also running the Juniors' training programme.

As part of her duties during 2011 Zoe will be at the Royal Albert Hall for the Mountbatten Music Festival, escorting the First Sea Lord and members of the Royal Family.

Later in the year she will give a presentation to the Second Sea Lord and business leaders at the Royalist Regatta in Portsmouth onboard HMS Warrior.





## Striking the Empire back

THE Battle of the Atlantic might have been won in the spring of 1943 (see right), but the U-boats continued the struggle right to the very end of the war.

In the closing months of the conflict, the Germans concentrated their efforts around the UK rather than in the open waters of the ocean.

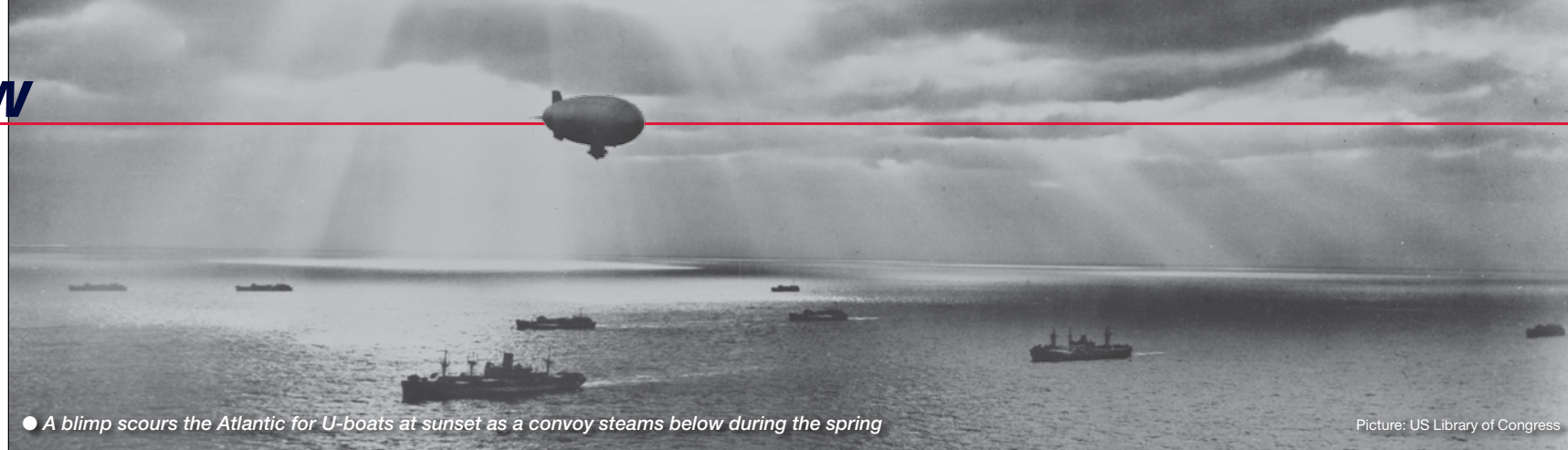
Whilst the change of emphasis did not turn the tide, German submarines did score notable successes, among them the tanker and supply ship *Empire Heritage* – the 18th largest merchantman sunk by U-boat in WW2.

Her fate – and that of her convoy, HX305 – plus her killer U482 are recounted in detail in John Peterson's excellent *Darkest Before Dawn* (History Press £12.99 ISBN 978-0-7524-5883-0).

Two out of three souls died when the grandly-titled Graf von Hartmut Matuschka *Freiherr* von Toppolczan und Spaetgen slipped through HX305's protective screen and torpedoed *Empire Heritage*, then dispatched the rescue ship *Pinto* half an hour later as it fished survivors out of the water some three miles off the northern coast of County Donegal in September 1944.

The *Empire Heritage* overturned as she sank, depositing much of her cargo – military trucks, Sherman tanks – as well as boilers on the seabed.

Despite lying more than 200ft down for seven decades, these remain relatively intact and provide some truly haunting images which have been reproduced here.



● A blimp scours the Atlantic for U-boats at sunset as a convoy steams below during the spring

Picture: US Library of Congress

# How the Atlantic was won

IF YOU were to guess the month in which Britain came closest to losing World War 2, most people would probably pick August or September 1940.

And they'd be wrong. The decisive Battle of Britain was fought in the late winter and early spring of 1943. History has come to know it as the Battle of the Atlantic, but really it was a struggle for the survival of our island nation and the sea lanes which are its lifeblood.

And in March 1943, Britain was losing that battle. Nearly a quarter of a million tons of shipping – 38 vessels – were sunk in four titanic convoy battles by U-boats. Defeat, Britain's official naval historian observed, stared the Allies in the face.

And yet eight weeks later, it was the U-boats which were licking their wounds in one of the great reversals of fortune in the 1939-45 conflict.

These pivotal 12 weeks are covered by US Navy veteran turned journalist and historian Ed O'Leary in *Turning the Tide* (Basic Books, £20 ISBN 978-0465013975).

This is not a new story – Martin Middlebrook (*Convoy*) and Jürgen Rohwer (*The Critical Convoy Battles of March 1943*) and Michael Gannon (*Bloody May*)

have all tackled the subject, to name just a few.

But most books on this decisive period focus on either the worst month (March) or the decisive month (May), rather than the entire period.

*Turning the Tide* is based on the experiences of British, American, Canadian and German sailors, merchantmen and navy, recounted in interviews, personal papers, memoirs.

And as such this is good narrative history which gives the reader a flavour of what it was like to fight in the Battle of the Atlantic at its climax. It was a struggle of unremitting strain and terror for friend and foe alike.

2/O G D Williams was torpedoed in the Royal Mail steamer *Nariva* and took to a lifeboat with shipmates. They watched as several men in another raft were sucked into the hole the torpedo had blown in the *Nariva's* side as she sank. "I can still hear the screams of the men inside the hull," Williams recalled years later.

Stoker Dean Wynne, shipwrecked aboard the steamer *Kingsbury* in the pivotal battle for Convoy HX229/SC122 in March

1943, spent the night clinging to an upturned dinghy awaiting rescue.

"It was very tempting to let go and pass on to heaven-sent oblivion than endure much more of this, with very little prospect of being rescued."

While the U-boats enjoyed vivid confirmation of their successes – "the flash of torpedoes exploding and the sight of ships slipping beneath the waves" – the escorts hunting them often had no such substantiation of a kill.

Lt Robert Atkinson, commanding Flower-class corvette HMS *Pink*, carried out a "most accurate and successful attack" against a suspected submarine. His men "greedily and most enthusiastically" sought wreckage from the boat. None was found, but several minutes later "a dull and most powerful underwater explosion shook the ship". Atkinson determined that it was a U-boat exploding – or possibly imploding – and recorded a 'probable kill' (in fact badly-damaged U358 survived).

When there was visible proof of success, such as oil on the surface after a pounding from

HMS *Duncan*, it provided a morale boost not merely to the ship's company, but everyone in Convoy SC120; the destroyer steamed through the middle of the columns of merchantmen flying a simple flag: KILL. Seamen waved and cheered.

What's striking is the capricious nature of the battle – some ships would be sunk, others spared, some sailors saved, others left to drift in the Atlantic.

And this, unlike other theatres, was not just a young man's war – many merchant crewmen were archetypal salty sea dogs; 18-year-old Dean Wynne's chief engineer was aged 70. He did not survive the *Kingsbury's* sinking – but that wasn't entirely unusual. In March 1943 two out of five men on a ship sunk by U-boats died or drowned, 1,120 souls in all.

The convoy battles of March 1943 left Western Approaches Command "pretty sombre", their counterparts at U-boat headquarters believed Britain might be starved into submission in a couple of months.

Instead, within those two months it was the German submarines which had been defeated. A combination of increased convoy protection, increased air cover (long-range aircraft and escort carriers) and technological leaps (submarine-detecting radar on aircraft and Enigma code breakthroughs) turned near defeat into comprehensive victory.

As losses rose, Karl Dönitz chose to chastise rather than encourage his men:

If there is anyone who thinks that combating convoys is no longer possible, he is a weakling and no-true U-boat captain. The Battle in the Atlantic is getting harder, but it is the determining element in the waging of the war. Do your best with this convoy. We must smash it to bits.

Ten days later the admiral called off the battle.

Victory/defeat in the Atlantic is a battle as decisive as Midway, Stalingrad, D-Day, Britain. The scale of the Allied triumph is often forgotten. In the four months after Dönitz withdrew his boats to regroup, no merchantman was sunk in the North Atlantic. Or to put it another way, it would be akin to not a single bomb falling on British soil for four months after Battle of Britain Day.

Except that the Battle of the Atlantic was a battle out of sight, its effects never as obvious to the British public as the duel between RAF and Luftwaffe.

But the fundamentals of the struggle for Britain's sea lanes are no different today than they were in 1943. The country's maritime trade, Karl Dönitz observed, was "the very life of the British nation".

Nothing has changed.

## How the Atlantic was won (Pt 2)

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## The Grove Review

firm, but who had written and edited a number of works on land warfare. The result is *In Peril on the Sea: The Royal Canadian Navy and the Battle of the Atlantic* (Robin Brass Studio, £23.50 ISBN 1-896941-32-X)

The author writes in an accessible style and provides by way of introduction a short chapter history of the RCN and its predecessors up to 1939.

The perennial problems faced in obtaining support for a naval service from a land-orientated government far from the sea, resulted in the RCN comprising on the outbreak of war less than 3,000 personnel and a force of 13 vessels, whose combat power consisted of six British-built destroyers of the standard inter-war type.

The demands of war and the crying need for trade defence assets, clearly articulated from London, caused Canada to begin one of the fastest naval build-ups of all time.

A price had to be paid – a serious one – as Graves openly admits. Ship output out-ran that of trained crews and proper equipment and the fighting capacity of the RCN suffered severely as a result.

There was little alternative however if convoys were to receive anti-submarine escort all the way across the Atlantic, as they did from mid-1941. The Canadians fought manfully to overcome all their operational difficulties, lessons being learned in the harsh school of North Atlantic fighting. Too often the activities of the Canadian escorts were marked by inefficiency compared to their better trained and equipped

British counterparts, but that was hardly the Canadians' fault.

At the end of 1942 the new C-in-C Western Approaches, Admiral Sir Max Horton, caused considerable transatlantic offence by withdrawing the Canadian escort groups from the middle of the main North Atlantic run, for better training and use on the less-hard-pressed Gibraltar convoys.

Churchill chose his words carefully when he informed his counterpart in Ottawa of this. Canadian attempts to maintain their position in mid-Atlantic were undermined by a disaster which overtook Convoy ONS 152 and its Canadian escort in the dying days of the year; 14 out of 45 ships sunk and an escort commander in a state of nervous collapse. So it was that the four Canadian escort groups in the Mid Ocean Escort Force were transferred, but only until May 1943.

This useful respite greatly increased their effectiveness, but it meant the Canadian groups reappeared right at the end of the decisive convoy battles of the Spring.

The Canadians did however play a significant part in defeating the German autumn counter-attack with U-boats equipped with enhanced anti-aircraft armament and homing torpedoes. Nevertheless the total of submarine kills in this period still did not please the government which led to the removal of Rear Admiral Nelles, the Canadian Chief of Naval Staff. The author provides clear accounts of this and other examples of the rather vicious Canadian bureaucratic

naval politics.

The RCN did well as Allied forces nibbled steadily at the U-boats deployed in the eastern Atlantic and contributed to the final defeat of the German submarine fleet, although, rather ironically, in the closing stages of the war the Germans were trying to exploit the continued weaknesses of the defences in Canada's home waters.

The author tells his story well and the book is amply illustrated by many interesting photographs and drawings and some of the best graphics and maps that I have seen. The book is worth getting for these alone.

There are, however, a few problems. The author was working some time ago and was unable to look at the important work that has appeared in recent years. His strictures on pre-war British attitudes to anti-submarine warfare would have been mitigated if he had read Franklin's valuable analysis of pre-war British policy that came out the same year Graves' book appeared. It is a shame the Canadian was not tipped off that this work was in progress.

There are some mistakes too, also a reflection of the author's inexperience with naval historical matters. The text ought to have been reviewed and, where necessary, amended by one of Canada's excellent group of specialist naval historians. The most annoying error is perhaps the author's accusation that the *Swordfish* was an inefficient anti-submarine aircraft; such is far from the truth. This might result

from a slight colonial anti-British bias that surfaces elsewhere now and then.

Another error is the author's assertion that the raid in the North Atlantic by Graf *Spee's* sister *Lützow* took place "late in the year" after her more famous sister's cruise. They were simultaneous operations and the former *Deutschland* was back home some time before Graf *Spee* was scuttled.

Graves also implies that the Americans escorted fast convoys to the MOMP (Mid Ocean Meeting Point) from the inception of 'all the way' escort in 1941 and then contradicts himself on the same page when he describes the Canadian escort of fast convoy HX 133 in June 1941.

Only later, as accurately reported in the book, was American aid with the fast convoys provided – even though the USA was not yet in the war. US ships also supported hard-pressed Canadian escorts on slow convoys and there is an interesting picture of the damaged destroyer USS *Greer* torpedoed on such a mission in October, long before Pearl Harbor.

These inconsistencies are marks as much of slightly shoddy editing as much as anything else. There are a number of annoying repetitions of material and even wording. The chapters are complemented by some interesting and useful first-hand accounts, but these are sometimes not the same as the periods covered by the chapters which rather upsets the book's chronology.

These niggles are a real shame as this soft-covered volume is otherwise beautifully produced and is a good book, generally fairly argued in a typically Canadian 'warts and all' style. Despite its slight blemishes, it deserves a wide readership.





## Silver ladies

Continued from page 48  
consistent series in tricky conditions.

On the penultimate day we picked up a black flag penalty and thus used up our discard which meant we went into the medal race in third instead of first.

In light and difficult conditions, the main contenders changed places up to the finish. A second position in the race put us on the podium with silver – our first medal as a team!

We are really proud of this result after everything we went through in 2010 and believe it is a sign of things to come.

Having finished top British boat at all regattas since Sail for Gold, we are laying down our claim to Olympic selection and our current world ranking of fourth shows the progress we have made since teaming up.

The remaining few months of winter have been spent in Palma, honing our skills ready for the European legs of the World Cup.

Our main rival helm, Sarah Ayton, has retired; juggling the responsibilities of motherhood and Olympic campaigns proved too much.

Her crewmate Saskia Clark has teamed up with Hannah Mills to continue her campaign. They will prove to be formidable opponents in the light winds but we should have a real speed edge in windier conditions.

This coming season will be the hardest of the campaign as everyone raises their game to try to achieve Olympic selection.

We know there will be hard times to come but we are confident that we have put the right building blocks in place this winter to carry us through and to allow us to reach our full potential.

## Charity rugby clash

RUGBY fans can watch a top-quality clash and raise money for Force charities this month.

The Game for Heroes match between London Wasps and Bath will be staged at Twickenham on Easter Sunday, April 24.

The match is one of numerous initiatives by Wasps over the next two years to support military charities.

Monies raised will be shared among BLESMA, Combat Stress, Special Boat Service Association,



## Slough slain (again)

**IT WAS** the turn of the RN Ice Hockey Association's B squad to kick-off (or rather face-off) the latest round of fixtures with a home tie against their Army counterparts.

It was obvious from the start that the Army B team were slightly more developed than the RN, writes Lt Adam Lappin.

They took an early lead at the start of the game and took full advantage of their initial surge to go four goals ahead with only 12 minutes played in the first period. The Navy dug deep to get back in the game and were given a glimmer of hope when Lt S Carnew (824 NAS) scored towards the end of the first period.

The RN were unable to fend off the Army's advances early on in the second period as they added

two more goals to their tally, but the Navy looked like they had settled down with a brace from Kevin Cave to even the period at two goals each.

The third period went the same way as the first with the Army putting three goals past the Navy goaltender before Cave scored his hat-trick goal and the Navy's fourth.

The game finished in a 9-4 defeat for the Senior Service but the clash showed areas in which the players could improve.

Next up were the Slough Satans on RN home 'turf' in Gosport (pictured above) after the Navy had put 22 goals (!) past them in January in Berkshire.

They were clearly ready for this fixture as they made sure that everyone on their books was available including a complete line (five players) from the Czech Republic who signed for the club while working in the UK.

The tone of the game was apparent from the outset; the visitors were very devilish indeed, trying to out-muscle the Navy players with very physical play from the first drop of the puck.

The RN rose to the challenge and opened the scoring after ten minutes with Mne B Hubbs (40 Cdo) adding to his previous haul against Slough.

This rich scoring vein continued through the first period with the Navy scoring two more goals (with another from Mne Hubbs) to the Satans' one.

The second period witnessed

the Navy's customary 'middle period dip' with Slough scoring two in quick succession to even the score, but this seemed to light a fire under the RN players and spur them to get back in the game.

Carnew scored the Navy's fourth goal with a well-placed shot into the top corner to retake the lead before the Satans levelled at 4-4 as the period ended.

The final period was all about the Navy: two more strikes from Hubbs to take his tally to four and a raft of assists for Lt Carnew to redeem himself for earlier open goal misses.

The Satans sensed defeat and turned their efforts to increasing their physical play. There were a lot of individual battles on the ice in this period with some big hits from Cave, Hubbs (who missed one hit and took himself out on the boards), Lt Lappin (HMS Nelson), Mne Sullivan (30 Cdo RM) and our newly-acquired Canadian players Lts Matter and Machnee (HMS Sultan) to keep the Satans suppressed.

The game ended in an 8-4 victory for the Navy and man of the match title for Lt Lappin.

There's a grass roots event for RN/RM personnel who fancy taking up the sport at HMS Nelson on April 26.

Details at [www.mhiha.org.uk](http://www.mhiha.org.uk) or from team Manager Kevin Cave ([manager@mhiha.org.uk](mailto:manager@mhiha.org.uk)) and Lt Lappin ([treasurer@mhiha.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@mhiha.org.uk)). Training is at Planet Ice rink in Gosport every Tuesday evening at 2230.



## Pilgrims' pride

ONE of this sextet isn't a trained killer (although he does sport a bushy 'tache most Royal Marines circa 1980 would aspire to...).

Posing with Pilgrim Pete are Royal Marine Commandos, guests of Plymouth Argyll as the football club hosted its third annual Armed Services Day. (Pete's the one with the pot belly, leprechaun's hat and big Ginsters' pasties emblem on his top, by the way.)

Personnel from all three Forces were given preferential treatment as the struggling League 1 side (or Division 3 as old timers like the Navy News team prefer to call it) hosted Colchester United.

The preamble to the match saw recruiting vans out in force, plus plenty of collecting buckets for SSAFA, and 20 minutes of music from the City of Plymouth Pipe Band, led for the last time by Drum Major Cdr Charles Crichton.

As the performance drew to a close, outgoing Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet Vice Admiral Sir Richard Ibbotson took the salute before Cdr Crichton handed over his mace to his successor, MOD policeman Dave Tee who works at Devonport.

Then it was time for Pilgrim Pete to deliver the match ball, with a little help from the green berets, abseiling from a stand.

Before that ball could be kicked in anger, RN chaplain Rev Matt Godfrey – a former semi-professional footballer – led the crowd and players in prayers.

"It's great for the football club and for the city to pay tribute," said Argyle supremo and onetime England midfield maestro Peter Reid.

"Though Plymouth is an Armed Services city, I think everybody in the country should be proud of what our Armed Services do.

"I went to Afghanistan to see the lads in 2006 and the work that they do is invaluable."

As for the game, the Pilgrims triumphed 2-1.

Picture: LA(Phot) Nicki Wilson, FRPU West

# WIRcing class heroes

**A TEAM** of 18 Royal Navy competitors and two MOD staff – comprising more than half of Team GB – took part in the World Indoor Rowing Championships at the Agannis Arena in Boston.

Royal Navy rowers have regularly taken part in the contest over the past 15 years, but for the 30th anniversary championships, the team's strength in numbers and ability was the best ever, writes Paul Winton.

More than 2,500 competitors took part at the birthplace of the original Concept 2 (C2) ergonomic rowing machine.

Over the past 12 months there's been an upsurge in interest by Royal Navy personnel who have been keen to train and compete on these simple but deceptively demanding machines.

Enthusiasm grew quickly after the C2 UK monthly challenges drew a large number of entries from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, establishing the largest C2 'Super League' for any team or club in the UK.

L/Cpl Ollie Osborne (CTCRM) was the fastest Team GB rower over the 2k championship distance, with a personal best time of 6m 15.1s to finish 8th in the men's 30+ Hwt division, where he competed against some very high-class opposition with 'on the water' Olympic and World Championship pedigree.

Also in the same race was PO(AWT) Buster Brown (Collingwood) whose interest stirred in HMS St Albans when reading a report of the 2010 event.

Season-long rivalry between these two saw Brown narrowly beat Osborne in the RN championships, then edging ahead through sequential C2 UK monthly challenges until Osborne's third place in the recent English Championships pipped Brown to the bronze. One wonders what the pre-event topic of discussion was for these two room/row mates!

At WIRC, Brown led Osborne for all but the

final 250m as the latter produced an excellent sustained sprint finish to overcome the tiring senior rate who finished ninth in 6m 19.6s.

Lt Cdr Jim Thompson (FOST Devonport) had spent most of the previous nine months deployed in HMS Manchester, so in Boston he reaped the benefit of committing to a long-term structured training regime as he posted a personal best in the same men's 30+ Hwt division to finish 11th in 6m 21.1s.

Following closely behind were Lt Damien Ralls (Neptune) in 19th with a personal best of 6m 31.7s and his training partner CPO Baz Greig (Neptune) in 22nd place with 6m 38.9s.

Multi-sport endurance devotee Lt Cdr Derek Powles (PORFLOT) overcame a back injury to compete and finished 25th in 6m 49.1s, content with an injury-free race, but looking forward to repeating his previous sub 6m 30s form at the earliest opportunity.

The men's 40+ Hwt category also had a large Royal Navy contingent. Cpl Shaun Hickson (40 Cdo) used his long-standing racing experience to secure an 8th-place finish in 6m 27.5s, with Lt Cdr Jules Stevenson (Temeraire) six places behind, but with his best time of 6m 32.6s at the fifth time of trying, thus demonstrating it is possible to develop physical performance against the adverse effects of the human ageing process.

Former 'Mr Plymouth 1992' CPO Collin Leiba (HMS Talent) finished 17th in 6m 38.9s, content with the performance, but bemoaning the fact that the increased aerobic training load had eroded some of his muscular strength and power – although no-one else seemed to notice.

Lt Cdr Rory West (Navy Command) posted a personal best of 6m 41.8s to finish 18th, another team member who had made the most of training opportunities during a long pre-Christmas deployment in HMS Montrose had an excellent sign-up rate for the C2 UK monthly challenges, many of whom remain highly ranked in the series.

The battle for WO1 supremacy was won by WO1 Paul Flower (PORFLOT) 6m 50.7s

(30th) as he beat WO1 Spencer Sheppard (DES Bath/DSTL) 6m 51.9s by two places, albeit the latter was consoled by a very-welcome personal best.

Former 6m 19s performer Lt Kev Anderson (Shrivenham) separated these two as he continued his return to form with a 6m 51.8s finish.

Competing in the very-competitive open categories against some of the best rowers in the world were LET Andy Campbell (MCM1) in the men's race and LReg Penny Rogers (NPM West) in the women's race.

Both were slightly short of pbs, but overcame nervous apprehension for mid order finishes in 6m 54.1s (181st) and 7m 46s (146th) respectively.

The men's 50+ Hwt race was arguably the highest standard of all when weighting performance for age with the winner posting a 6m 10.5s (21 years older than L/Cpl Ollie Osborne).

Paul Winton (MCTA) was 19th in 6m 49.6s, two places in front of a determined Lt Doug Wylie's 6m 51.6s, who had made over seven seconds improvement since the 2010 race, through commitment to a structured training regime. This made a mockery of his post-race remarks in 2010 "That was the hardest thing I've ever done!"

Following behind was Cdr Martin Claxton (Neptune) in the final few weeks of his Service, forsaking GRT for grunt and a 38th place (7m 8.4s) time.

Steve Penberthy (Temeraire) was the longest standing world championship racer of the 38 Team GB members present, he finished 39th (7m 9s), experiencing much physical pain after a bold attempt to sustain a fast early race pace.

You can sign up for the C2 UK monthly challenges in the RN and RM Super Leagues at [www.concept2.co.uk/challengeseries](http://www.concept2.co.uk/challengeseries).

More details from Lt Doug Wylie (Temeraire-SO3PED/ExH or 9380 20771) and Paul Winton (DES MCTA-MS-MVAU or, 9380 23644).



ABs Damien Spratt and Debbie Willis in front of Brussels' triumphal arch before the marathon

## Muscles in Brussels

SEVEN sailors from HMS President joined 10,500 runners in the 70th anniversary Brussels half and full marathons.

The runners started in Parc Cinquantenaire and ended in the magnificent Grand Place. With a mix of hardcore marathoners and half-marathon 'fun-runners', and despite not being able to resist the delights of the strong Belgian beer the evening before, all President runners completed the race.

Cdr Peter Gracey and AB Debbie Willis obtained personal best times, with commiserations due to the officer who was just seven seconds over the four-hour

mark in the marathon.

The other President runners were S/Lt Richard Notley, PO Jim O'Sullivan, LS Ant Taylor, and ABs James Croft and Damien Spratt.

Ant had only just returned from mobilisation in the Arabian Gulf where he had been working with Force Protection Group Royal Marines. Since the race James has deployed to the Arabian Gulf where he is working with other Royal Naval Reservists of the Maritime Trade Operations (MTO) branch playing an important role liaising with merchant shipping in this important area of the world.

## Echo's fours for good

HMS Echo's footballers challenged counterparts from the Chinese Navy vessel Qian Daohu to a friendly when both ships were in the Omani port of Salalah.

The experience of the survey ship's team was matched by the enthusiasm of the Chinese with the final result being a very fair 4-4 draw.

Echo's goals came from Sgt 'Steve' Maddison RM and two from PO 'Shady' Lane. The other RN strike was an own goal forced by the energetic RM who caused mayhem in the Chinese defence.

Echo's man of the match was AB 'Hamish' David who was excellent throughout and kept the Brits in the contest.

The Chinese players were keen to point out that four plus four equals eight – which is a very lucky number and bodes well for us all for the new Year of the Rabbit.



## Next month



**Breaking point – Crete 70th anniversary memorial supplement**



**A lot less bowver than a hover? Testing the new fast landing craft**



**Fleet Review in miniature – a rare gathering of P2000s in the Solent**

**Plus**

**Dead and re-buried – what happened to Haslar's fallen?**



● Lt Cdr Penny Clark and Katrina Hughes on their way to silver in the Miami Olympic Classes Regatta

Picture: Skandia Team GBR

## Silver ladies

# Trials of courage

A TEAM of 11 athletes and four staff from Hasler Company and Termoli Troop (40 Cdo RM remedial troop) took part in the Wounded Warrior Trials in Camp Pendleton, San Diego.

The trials were the prelude to next month's Wounded Warrior Games – an olympiad for injured veterans in the US Armed forces – but an international team was also invited to attend, writes Brig Paul Denning RM.

So an Allied squad of 11 Britons, six Australians and two Dutch personnel flew to Pendleton, home of Wounded Warrior Regiment (West), a unit of approximately 200 marines and sailors with complex injuries and illnesses.

The team underwent a two-day coaching programme delivered by top US able-bodied and Paralympic coaches and athletes.

The aim was to scope the event with a view towards future participation, rather than to compete on an even basis against the USMC. Particular care was taken to ensure that the experience contributed to the recovery of all the injured men.

As for the competition, the visiting side topped the medal table after day one... and remained there until the veteran's team knocked them off at the end of day three.

Notable performances included:

- Mne Gibbons won gold as part of the swimming relay team and silver in the 50 and 100m freestyle. Cpl Abbott won a bronze in the 50m backstroke.
- Mne Bayley achieved the highest score in the preliminaries of 10m air rifle, and missed out on a bronze by 0.5. An outstanding achievement when he is unable to sit or hold a static position for any length of time due to his injuries.
- A fifth and eighth in the 30km cycling event were



● Cycling medal winners Mnes Townsend and Linaker

great efforts by Mne French and Cpl Abbott respectively; the former had never ridden more than three kilometres before and the latter only left hospital three weeks before. Mne Linaker earned a bronze over 20km on the recumbent bike and Mne Townsend stormed to gold in the 10km hand bike event, finishing eight minutes ahead of the second-place rider.

- On the track Mne Gibbons proved equally adept out of water earning silver in the 800m, while Mne Townsend followed up his hand bike gold with bronze in the wheelchair at 100, 400 and 800m distances and a silver as part of the 4 x 400m relay.

The final medal tally saw a haul of two golds, six silvers and five bronze medals – a fantastic effort from an inexperienced team displaying enthusiasm and determination in abundance.

The impressive display from individuals was noticed with Paralympians and US coaches commenting on the obvious potential that these lads have got in their disciplines.

Recognition should also be given to the tremendous work done by the back-room support staff – both in the UK (WO2 McIntyre, C/Sgt Mulholland) and those with the team (WO2 Worthey, C/Sgt Wilkins and Sgt Bourne). Without their tireless effort the UK participation in this event would never have succeeded.

The aspiration now is to build on the links between Hasler Coy and the Wounded Warrior Regiment with the aim of competing again in the future; it would be interesting to see the improvement in the medal haul after a period of structured training instead of the two days in the USA.

The final words belong to the CO of Wounded Warrior Regiment (West), Lt Col Jay Krail USMC: "Next year you can leave your 'Ringers' at home."

OLYMPIC sailing hopeful Lt Cdr Penny Clark believes the 'building blocks' for selection for the 2012 Games are in place.

The officer and racing partner Katrina Hughes have been training and competing around the globe over the winter. We'll let Lt Cdr Clark continue:

"In November we moved to Perth, which is due to be the venue for the 2011 World Championships. We were keen to test the waters and to compete in the 'test event' the Australians were running.

After a couple of weeks' training with the British squad we finished a creditable fourth at the test event but were extremely disappointed to have missed out on bronze which had been within our reach during the medal race.

In January we took off to Miami for some more training and a couple of regattas. The first of these was the North American Championships where we once again finished fourth although with racing predominately in our least-favoured conditions we were pleased with the result.

A few more days' training and it was on to the first World Cup event of 2011 – the Miami Olympic Classes Regatta.

This was our first non-training regatta since Sail For Gold and we were keen to put in a good performance and show where we were at after all our hard winter training.

We raced the best we have to date and also showed some great downwind speed which meant we put together a really

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